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The Waking state and The 'Why' of the Samadhi-Plunge

Chapter-1

Above us dwells a superconscient god
Hidden in the mystery of his own light:
Around us is a vast of ignorance
Lit by the uncertain ray of the human mind,
Below us sleeps the Inconscient dark and mute

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VII, Canto II, p. 484)

Since mind-consciousness is the sole waking state possessed by mental being,...it cannot ordinarily quite enter into another without leaving behind completely both all our waking existence and all our inward mind. This is the necessity of the Yogic trance

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 379).

To enter into Samadhi is to pass into a state of which no conscious memory remains on awakening...

When people speak of Samadhi, I tell them, "Well, try to develop your inner individuality and you can enter into these very regions in full consciousness, with the delight of communion with the highest regions without losing consciousness for that and returning with a zero instead of an experience."

(The Mother, *Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, pp. 43-45)

Yes, they [all the states of higher realisation] can be attained even in full activity. Trance is not essential.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*, p. 744)

A THOROUGHGOING psychological self-investigation far transcending its present artificial bounds, an occult-spiritual exploration of the total field of our being, reveals the truth that what we normally know of ourselves is not all we are: it is no more than 'a bubble on the ocean of our existence,' Indeed, apart from

the very insignificant and restricted part of our waking individual consciousness, we are normally perfectly ignorant of the whole of the rest of our being, " the immense more', that lies hidden in apparently inaccessible "reaches of being which descend into the profoundest depths of the subconscient and rise to highest peaks of superconscience, or which surround the little field of our waking self with a wide circumconscient existence of which our mind and sense catch only a few indications."

As a matter of fact, following the ancient Wisdom of the Upanishads, we can broadly divide the totality of our existence into four provinces or states: the 'waking state' (*jāgrat*), the subliminal or the 'dream-state' (*svapna*), the superconscient or the 'sleep-state' (*susupti*) and finally the state beyond or the 'ultimate state' (*turīya*) Corresponding to these four states of our existence, we have in us four selves or rather the four-fold status of the one Self that is Brahman: the waking self or *Vaisvānara*, the Waker; the dream-self or *Taijasa*, the Dreamer; the sleep-self or *Prājña*, the Sleeper; and finally the supreme or absolute self of being, the Fourth (*caturtha*), the Incommunicable (*avyavahāyra*), the One without second (*advaita*), of which the three before are derivations.

In less abstruse and mystical terms, we may state that the fourfold scale of being delineated above represents, so to say, the 'degrees of the ladder of being' that an embodied soul must successively attain if he would seek to climb back from his phenomenal and ignorant self-view towards the supreme superconscience of the highest state of his self-being. But what are the essential traits of these four statuses?

The Waking State: Our waking consciousness, the consciousness that we normally possess and that is dominated by the physical mind, is a limping surface consciousness shut up in the body limitation and within the confines of the little bit of personal mind. We are ordinarily aware only of our surface selves and quite ignorant of all that functions behind the veil. And yet "what

is on the surface, what we know or think we know of ourselves and even believe that that is all we are, is only a small part of our being", and by far the larger part lies hidden "behind the frontal consciousness behind the veil, occult and known only by an occult knowledge."

While in this normal waking consciousness, a man becomes externalised and gazes outward and rarely if ever inward (*parampasyati nāntarātman*). Hence the self in this status of external wakefulness has been described as 'wise of the outward' (*jāgaritasthā no bahihprajñah*). No spiritual life or any higher or deepr realisation becomes possible if one remains fettered to this waking state.

The Dream-State: This represents the subliminal condition of our conscious existence, the large luminous realm of interior consciousness, that corresponds to the subtler life-plane and mind plane and even a subtle physical plane or our being. Indeed, behind our outer existence, our outer mind and life and body.

Our larger beings sits behind cryptic walls:
There are greatnesses hidden in our unseen parts
That wait their hour to step into life's front:

....

Our inner Mind dwells in a larger light,
Its brightness looks at us through hidden doors;

....

A mighty life-self with its inner powers
Supports the dwarfish modicum we call life;

....

Our body's subtle self is throned within
In its viewless palace of veridical dreams.

Thus, the subliminal reach of our being comprises our inner existence, that is to say, our inner mind, inner life and inner physical with the soul or psychic entity supporting them all. It is of the nature of a secret intraconscient and circumconscient

awareness in full possession of a brilliant mind power, a limpid life-force and un unclouded subtle-physical sense of things.

It is in this subliminal realm of our interior existence, the realm of subtle subjective supraphysical experiences and of dreams and visions and heavenly intimations, a veritable world of wonderful illuminations, that our mind and vital being retire when they withdraw by inward-drawn concentration from their absorption in surface activties.

It is because of its inward plunge bringing in its train a wealth of inner experiences, dreams and visions, that the self in this status has been termed the 'dream-self that is wise of the inward' (*svapnasthāno' ntahprajñah).*

The Sleep-State: This corresponds to a still higher superconscient status, a state of pure consciousness (*prajñānaghana),* pure bliss (*ānandamaya hyānandabhuk)* and pure mastery (*sarvesvara).* This exalted state of self-absorbed consciousness is called 'sleep' because all mental or sensory experiences cease when we enter this superconscience. This 'dreamless sleep state' (*yata supto... na kañcana svapnam pasyati*), this status of massed consciousness and omnipotent Intelligence (*sarvesvara sarvajña*), cantains in it "all the powers of being but all compressed within itself and concentrated solely on itself and when active, then active in aconsciousness where all is the self." It is in this superconscient 'sleep-state' that we become "inherently and intrinsically conscious of our self and spirit, not as here below by a reflection in silent mind or by acquisition of the knowledge of a hidden Being within us; it is through it, through that either of super conscience, that we can pass to a supreme status, knowledge experience."

The Turiya State: This corresponds to the highest status far transcending the first three, being the status of pure self-existence and absolute being, where consciousness and unconsciousness as we actually conceive of both lose their validity. It is the supreme state of Sachchidananda, 'a state of superconscience

absorbed in its self-existence, in a self-silence or a self-ecstasy.'

About the self of this fourth or the Turiya state, the Mandukya Upanishad speaks:

"He who is neither inward-wise, nor outward-wise, nor both inward and outward wise, nor wisdom self-gathered, nor possessed of wisdom, nor unpossessed of wisdom, He who is unseen and incommunicable, unseizable, featureless, unthinkable, andunnameable, Whose essentiality is awareness of the Self in its single existence, in Whom all phenomena dissolve, Who is Calm, Who is Good, Who is One than Whom there is no other, Him they deem the fourth: He is the Self, He is the object of Knowledge."

Such is then the fourfold division of the totality of our existence, and true knowledge, that is to say, spiritual knowledge about our self-being as well as about the world-being becomes available to us only when we succeed in establishing a conscious rapport with the subliminal and the now superconscient realms of our being. But unfortunately our waking state is blissfully ignorant of its connection with or even the very existence o f these supernal reaches. So the goal of Yoga which is essentially an attempt at arriving at an integral self-knowledge, an entire consciousness and power of being and a supreme union or unity with Sachchidananda, the Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, can be attained only by a progressive ascension of the mind to higher and still higher planes or degrees of consciousness.

But here a serious and see mingley insuperable hitch presents itself. For mind is the sole waking consciousness actually possessed by man the mental being and this mind in its actuality completely fails to remain awake, beyond a certain line, in the really higher states of realisation where the heightened and intensified spiritual experiences are in the nature of things sought. This almost absolute incompatibility of our waking mentality with the highest ranges of spiritual consciousness is strikingly brought

out in the following very interesting account of Sri Ramakrishna's repeated failures to main remain physically awake on the summits of realisation. Swami Saradananda, one of the closest direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the writer of his authoritative biography, is reporting:

"In how simple terms the Thakur [i.e. Sri Ramakrishna] used to explain to us these abstruse truths of spiritual life

" 'Well, something rises from my feet and climbs towards the head. So long as it does not reach the head, retain consciousness; but as soon as it reaches there, an *utter forgetfulness* overtakes me — then there is no more seeing or hearing, far be it to speak of talking.' Who would speak then? — The very sense of 'I' and 'Thou' vanishes altogether! I often decide to speak everything to you, all about the visions and experiences that accompany this ascension. So long as that has reached so far (*pointing to his heart)* or even so far (*pointing to his throat)*, it seems *somebody shuts my mouth and I fail tocontrol my forgetfulness! (Pointing to his throat)* when one ascends still further than this level, no sooner than I contemplate for a moment to speak of the visions and experiences there, the mind immediately shoots upwards and *no reporting becomes any more possible!'*.

"Oh, innumerable are the occasions when the Thakur sought to exercise the utmost control over himself so that he could report to us about the types of experiences that one has when the mind transcends the throat-centre but each time he failed!... One day he emphatically stated:

" 'Today I must speak to you everything , not a bit would I hide' — and he started to speak. He could very well speak all about the centres upto the heart and the throat, and then pointing to the junction of his eye-brows he said, 'Whenever the mind ascends here, the embodied soul has a vision of the supreme Self and goes into Samadhi. Then there exists but a thin transparent veil between the individual Self and the Supreme. And

there the soul experiences in this way —'. Speaking so far, as soon as he started detailing the realisation of the Supreme, he went into the Samadhi state. After coming out of his trance state, he recommenced reporting again, but again went into Samadhi. After such *repeated attempts and failures* he spoke to us with tears in his eyes:

" 'My sons, my intention is to report to you everything without hiding the least bit of it: but the Mother won't allow me to speak — She completely shut my mouth!'

"We wondered at this and thought: 'How strange! It is apparent that he is trying to report and that he is even suffering because of his failure to do so, but he seems to be altogether helpless in this matter. — Surely the Mother must have been very naughty indeed! He wants to speak about holy things, about the vision of God, and it is surely odd that She should shut his mouth!'

"We did not know at time that the mind's range is indeed very much limited and that, unless one proceeds farther then its farthest reach, one cannot expect to have the realisation of the Supreme! In our innocence we could not understand at that time that out of sheer love for us the Thakur was attempting the impossible!"

Sri Ramakrishna himself in his inimitable style emphasised on more than one occasion this fact of the inability of our mind consciousness to retain its 'power of conscious discernment and defining experience' when it rises to the superconscient heights, He said:

'What happens when the mind reaches the seventh plane [and goes into Smadhi] cannot be described. Once a boat enters the [black waters] of the ocean, it does not return. Nobody knows what happens to the boat after that. Therefore the boat [i.e. Mind] cannot give us any information about the ocean.

"Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. No sooner did it enter the water than it melted. Now, who would tell

how deep the ocean was?"

So it is seen that in the actual state of our evolved waking existence the ascension and entry into the higher realms of our being becomes at all possible *only by receding farther and farther from the waking mentality,* by withdrawing from and losing touch with the dynamic surface life and taking a plunge into the immobile or ecstatic trance of absorbed super conscience. And herein lies for the spiritual seeker the necessity or even the inevitability of the Yogic trance state, so much so that it is emphatically asserted that Samadhi is 'not only a supreme means of arriving at the highest consciousness, but...the very condition and status of that highest consciousness itself, in which alone it can be completely possessed and enjoyed while we are in the body.'[3]

But in that case our goal of dynamic divinisation of life becomes fore doomed to failure. So we must now see whether the trance can be progressively transformed into a waking Samadhi and its spiritual gains made manifest and active even in our waking exist*ence.*

WHAT IS SAMADHI OR YOGIC TRANCE?

In her own depths she heard the unuttered thought
That made unreal the world and all life meant.
'Who art thou who claim'st thy crown or separate birth,
The illusion of the soul's reality
And personal godhead on an ignorant globe
In the animal body of imperfect man?
Only the blank Eternal can be true
All else is shadow and flash in Mind's bright glass,
O soul, inventor of man's thoughts and hopes,
Thyself the invention of the moments' stream,
illusions' centre or subtle apex point,
At last know thyself, from vain existence cease."

($ri Aurobindo, Savirit, *Book VII, Canto VI, p. 535*

Beyond the realm of thought, transcending the domain of duality, leaving Maya with all her changes and modifications far behind,.... shines the glory of the Eternal Brahman in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Knowledge, knower dissolve in the menstruum of One Eternal Consciousness; birth, growth and death vanish in that infinite Existence; and love, lover and beloved merge in that unbounded ocean of Supreme Felicity... Breaking down the ridge-poles of that tabernacle in which the soul had made its abode for untold ages- stilling the body, calming the mind and drowning the ego, comes the sweet joy of Brahman in that super conscious state. Space disappears in nothingness, time is swallowed up in Eternity... [and] it is all stillness indefinable.... The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the highest flight of Advaita Philosophy

(Life of Sri Ramakrishna, *Advaita Ashram, Almora, p. 181)*

The acquisition of the highest spiritual consciousness, at least statically if not dynamically, is the goal of all spiritual endeavor. But, as we have noted before, the spiritual reaches of consciousness lie far behind and above our normal waking mentality. Now the question is: is it possible to possess the spiritual consciousness while still remaining embedded in the ordinary mental functioning? In other words, can the normal unregenerate surface consciousness and the spiritual one be concomitant and simultaneously operative? Seekers in all ages and climes, who have the necessary credentials to pronounce on this point, are universally agreed to deny this possibility.

So, broadly speaking, four alternatives may open out before those who aspire after spirituality:

(i) To create a division, a separation, a dissociation of consciousness and to be spiritual within or above while the outer consciousness and its ignorant movements are indifferently watched and felt to be something intrinsically foreign and disparate. This is the solution of the 'Witness Consciousness'.

(ii) To be satisfied with the indirect glories of the spiritual

consciousness as reflected and refracted in the bosom of our normal mentality. This is what has been termed *'spiritual mental* realisation

(iii) To still and withdraw from the mental consciousness and retire to the supra-mental reaches. This is what can be called the 'trance-solution.'

(iv) To transform the nature of the normal waking consciousness, to divinise it as we would say, by bringing down there the fullest wealth and splendor of the spiritual heights, so that its present opacity and refractoriness may be altogether rectified. This is the solution of 'divine transfiguration' as envisaged by our Yoga.

Evidently the 'Witness Consciousness' and 'spiritual-mental realisation' fall far short of our goal; for,be it once again stated, this goal is no less than the establishment of Life Divine upon earth, a dynamic waking existence embodying Sachchidananda in his fully manifested glories.

But since the yogic trance or Samadhi is so often held up not only as a supreme means of access to the higher possible spiritual consciousness but 'as the very condition and status of that highest consciousness itself, in which alone it can be completely possessed and enjoyed while we are in the body," we must digress here for a while to examine the nature of Samadhi and find out its utility or otherwise in the pursuit of the Integral yoga .

Samadhi or Yogic Trance: Since mind-consciousness is normally found to be incompatible with the highest state of spiritual realisation, a veritable yoga or union must almost by definition connote the cessation of all mental functions (yogascittavrttinirodhah1) or even of the mind itself (*manonāso mahodayah).*

Now, to follow the terminology as used by Vyasa, the great commentator on the 'Yoga Aphorisms' of Patanjali, our mind stuff

may function in five different levels or conditions *(cittabhñmayah)*. These, from down upwards or from out inward, are (i) Ksipta or restless, the dissipated condition in which the mind is active and externalised and runs after objects of various sorts; (ii) müdha or torpid, the stupefied condition in which he mind under the influence of an excessive tamas gravitates downwards and wallows in the obscure depths of ignorance; (iii) *viksipta* or distracted, a condition in which the mind becomes relatively pacified and at times somewhat concentrated but thrown out again outwards because of the distracting movements; (iv) ekāgraor concentrated, a condition dominated by sattva in which the mind is able to concentrate for a prolonged stretch of time to the exclusion of all other thoughts, upon some particular chosen object or subject of concentration; and lastly (v) *niruddha* or stilled, a condition in which even the act or function of contemplation ceases and, all modifications of the mind being stopped, nothing what so ever is known or conceived by the latter.

*The first three conditions of the mind enumerated above are of course not at all conduc*ive to the practice of spirituality (*yogapakse na vartate*); it is only the last two o that make possible any spiritual illumination. As a matter of fact, in the parlance of the Patanjali System, "*ekāgra* or the state of concentration, when permanently established, is called *samprajñāta Yoga* or the trance of meditation, in which there is a clear and distinct consciousness of the object of contemplation. It is known also as samāpatei or *samprajn ta samādhi* in as much as citta or the mind is, in this state, entirely put into the object and assumes the form of the object itself. So also the state of niruddha is called *asamprajnata Yoga orasamprajnāta samādhi,...* because this is the trance of absorption in which all psychoses and appearances of objects are stopped..."

In more general terms we may say that Samadhi or yogic trance is that state of super consciousness in which the aspirant, diving deep or soaring high in the search of the soul or the

self, enters, when his consciousness, through an inward concentration, withdraws from the surface world as perceived by the senses and retires to progressively deeper interior realms of supersensus experiences. In this process of inward withdrawal or upward ascension, the consciousness first entersthe 'dream-state' and then proceeds to the 'sleep-state'. While inthe dram-statae, the outer mind of the Sadhaka becomes quiescent and his inner mind, separated from the outer andno longer covered upby it, ranges through a wonderful world of rich and variegated inner experiences.

To obviate any possible misunderstanding that the nomenclature 'dram-state' or 'sleep-state' may engender in an unwary spirit, we may forthwithstate here that theyogic dream-or sleep-states have nothing to do with the physical states of dream and sleep. "Inthe Yogic dream-state...the mindis inclear possession of itself, thoughnot ofhte physical world, works coherently,... (is perfectly] awake...not withthe out-going, but with an ingathered wakefulness in which, though immersed in itself, it exercises all its powers."

In the dream-state itself there is an infinite series of depths starting with that for which the world of physical senses is almost at the doors though momentarily shut out, and reaching to depths not likely to be broken in upon by the impact or call of the sensuous physical world. As a matter of fact, "beyond a certain point the trance becomes complete and it is then almost quite impossible to awaken or call back the soul that has receded into them; it can only come back by its own will or at most by a violent shock of physical appeal dangerous to the system owing to the abrupt upheaval of return."

With the increasing depths or heights of the degrees of consciousness attained by the soul, the experiences obtained become progressively remote and less and less communicable to the waking mind, until the trance becomes complete in an utter self gathering of the being when the central consciousness separates from the last vesting of mentality. Then it becomes an absolute impossibility for any records or transcripts of the experiences therein to reach the portals of the normal waking consciousness. This is the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi claimed to be the highest status of spiritual attainment and assiduously sought after by every seeker after trance.

In this ultimate trance-state of pure superconscient existence, in this supra-mental immersion in the infinite being and the un conditioned bliss, time and space and hence the world of names land forms vanish into nothing, all action of mental awareness whether of outward or of inward things is altogether abolished and everything is drawn up into the super cosmic Beyond.

Once attaining this supreme state of Nirvikalpa trance, the soul finds it difficult, well-nigh impossible, to return again to the active life-consciousness, for "it loses the hold on the cord which binds it to the consciousness of life, and the body is left, maintained indeed in its set position, not dead by dissolution, but incapable of recovering the ensolued life which had inhabited it."

We have so far analysed in abstract terms the physiognomy of the Yogic trance. To complete the account we would now like to reproduce in brief the concrete cases of the sages Uddalaka and Ramakrishna to show how in fact the consciousness withdrawing inward passes through progressively deepening states of being to repose finally in the absolute state of inrvikalpa Samadhi.

First the scriptural account of the trance of Uddalaka as depicted into the great work *Yoga-Vasishtha Maharamayana:*

*The Trance of Uddala*ka:"One day the sage deliberated: 'When will you attain to eternal peace by reaching the status of mindlessness, for such is indeed the condition for getting freed from the bondage of repeated births?' ... Then he Brahmin Uddalaka sat down to concentrate and withdraw his mind. But he could not succeed at once in attaining the Samadhi state, for his mind, in

the fashion of a restless baboon, began to fleet from object to object... At a later stage, the mind-monkey would at times leave outside contracts and felt eager for the enjoyment of the inner Sattwic bliss; but this was indeed an intermittent mood, for most often the mind would rush towards outward objects again, as if it was stung by a would rush toward outward object again, as if it was stung by a venomous snake. At times, his inner state was being cleared of the obscurity of ignorance and Uddalaka visioned the glory of a sun; but in no time his Chitta became restless again and flew outward in the manner of a startled bird. Again, he withdrew inward and experienced at times a vacant space or the Zero of an impenetrable darkness...As a warrior in battle kills his enemies with a sword, Uddalaka started destroying one by one all the vikalpas gone, he that were appearing inhis consciousness. the *vikalpasl gone,* he saw into he inner space a green-black Sun but proceed immediately to eradicate this inky darkness. Then the softness of a massed lustre greeted the sage Uddalaka But that too he eliminated in no time following the way of an elephant calf that gets into a lotus pond and tears away and devastates the lotuses all around. Once this massed splendour was gone, Uddalaka's mind succumbed to a spell of deep sleep just as man highly intoxicated loses his sobriety and then gets into torpor; but the sage was prompt enough to annul this state of sleep. Then his mind was filled with the consciousness of vyoma; but just as the wind sweeps away the dew-drops, he too swept away from his mind this clear and stainless consciousness of vyoma. But, following that, some sort of dazed dullness overtook him as if he was a heavily drunk man who had just come out of his torpid state. Even this too he vanquished.

"Then, at long last, the sage Uddalaka reached the status of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where there was neither any obscurity nor any ephemeral luster,"

That, in the state of Nirvikalpa trance, the body becomes immobile like a painted *image (citrārpitamivacalah)* and even a violent sense-appeal fails to bring back the soul to the waking

consciousness has been equally forcefully brought out by the Yoga-Vasishtha in the following account of the Samadhi of Shikhidhvaja:

"The queen Chudala went to the forest and found there the king Shikhidhvaja seated, like a sculptured tree, in the state of Nirvikalpa trance. She deliberated; 'I must now seek to re-awaken the king, otherwise he will leave his body very soon.' Then the queen Chudala approached the king's body and shouted at the top of her voice. This loud sound and then the sound of the trumpet frightened and startled the sylvan creatures, but the queen's repeated attempts failed to evoke any response from the king whose body remained tranced and immobile like a granite mass. Chudalathen laid her hands on the body of Shikhidhvaja and started violently agitating it. Thus shaken, the king's body fell down and rolled on the ground, but even then he did not recover his waking consciousness. Then the queen wondered and thought. 'It does not seem to be an easy proposition to awaken my King! Only if he still possesses the gain of a desire somewhere hidden in seed-form, that will help him to come back again to the waking state, in no other wise can he be aroused.' "

The Trance-Experience of Sri Ramakrishna: Now we come to the very authentic historical case of the Sage of Dakshinesvara whose trance-experiences as depicted in his authoritative biography published by the Ramakrishn Order itself we reproduce below:

"Sri Ramakrishna's Samadhi covered a wide range of experiences from his perception of various visions to the annihilation of his mind in the infinite consciousness of Brahman. It had also many forms....Thus he entered into a 'world of power', or 'a world of beauty', or 'a world of spiritual grandeur'.....He would commune with invisible beings-forms of the Divinity or Divine Incarnations of the past.

"Such visions however belong to the domain of Personality, which is not the last word in spiritual experiences. So long as a

sadhaka is satisfied with this kind of samadhi, his attainments cannot be side to be complete. He has not reached unfathomable depths of the ocean, though undoubtedly he has gone far behind the surface, encountering the forms of life abounding there, but he has not yet ransacked the priceless treasures of the deep, which reveal themselves only to those who have the courage to dive and on till they have touched bottom.

"So we find Sri Ramakrishna taking up another course of sadhana altogether different from his previous ones."

Then, a few pages further on, the biographer gives a vivid description of the first Nirvikalpa Samadhi-state of Sri Ramakrishna:

"Sri Ramakrishna passe dinto the ineffable glory of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In that rapturous estasy the senses and mind stopped their functions. The body became motionless as a corpse. The universe rolled away from his vision-even space itself melted away. Everything was reduced to ideas which floated like shadows in the dim background of the mind. Only the faint consciousness of 'I' repeated itself in dull monotony. Presently that too stopped, and what remained was Existence alone. The soul lost itself in the Self, and all idea of duality, of subject and object, was effaced. Limitations were gone, and finite space was one with infinite space. Beyond speech, beyond experience and beyond thought, Sri Ramakrishna had realised the Brahman-had become the Brahman.

"Totapuri [Sri Ramakrishna's Guru or the spiritual preceptor] sat for a long time, silently watching his disciple. Finding him perfectly motionless, he stole out of the room and locked the door lest anybody should intrude without his knowledge. Then he awaited the call from Sri Ramakrishna to open the door. The day passed on, the night came. Another day and still another - three days passed and there was no call. Totapuri was astonished and went to see what was wrong.

"He opened the door and entered the room. There sat Sri

Ramakrihan in the very same position in which he had left him. There was no manifestation of life in the body, but the countenance was calm, serene and radiant. He saw that the disciple was still dead to the objective world, his mind absorbed in the Self, without a flicker-absolutely steady!...

"With the utmost care he [Totapuri] determined if the heart was beating or if there was the slightest trace of respiration. Again and again he touched the disciple's corpse-like body. There was no sign either of life or of consciousness....It was undoubtedly a case of the Nirviklapa Samadhi-the culmination of Advaita practice!

"Totapuri immediately took steps to bring the mind of Sri Ramakrishna down to the world of phenomena."

After Totapuri left Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna decide to withdraw from the world of 'I' and 'Mine' and live constantly in unity with the Supreme. What followed then is very much revealing from our point of view and worth reproducing into he saint's own inimitable words:

"I stayed in that ineffable state for six months at a stretch, a state from which an ordinary soul knows no return, his body dropping off life a withered leaf from a tree! There was no sense of the passage of time, of how the days and the nights went by! Flies and insects used to get into the mouth and nostrils of my body as if in those of a corpse, but they evoked no response from me. Oftentimes I would ease nature involuntarily without being in the least aware of it! My body would not have remained viable for long, it would have surely dropped down dead, but for the circumstance of the arrival at this time of a Sannyasin with a heavy stick in his hand. he realised my state at the very first glance and felt that if this body could somehow be preserved, much good would be done to the world through its agency. It thus so happened that during meal-times he used to beat my body with the stick and no sooner did he find that a faint glimmer of awareness had come, he would push some morsels of good

into the mouth. In this way, on some days, little bit of food could reach my stomach while on other days event hat much failed.

"Six months rolled by in this wise. Then I heard the Mother's Voice: 'Come down a bit and stay in *Bhāva-Samādhi*, do stay in Bhava-Samadhi for the welfare of the world!' Then a serious disease assailed my bodily frame-blood-dysentery it was! I had then frequent bouts of griping pains and unbearable cramps and wrenches in the stomach! After I had suffered from such in tense agony for long six months, my consciences could come down little by; little into my body and finally I regained the waking state of orindary men."

So we have seen what Samadhi means and how the stat of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is eulgisedas the spiritual status *par excellence*. Now we proceed to show that trance-experiences, however lofty or however deep, fail to meet the demands of our Yoga, and at the same time indicate how our goal of dynamic divinisation of the waking physical existence can be realised.

Chapter-2

The Critique of the Trance-Solution

Chapter-2

The Voice replied: "Is this enough, O Spirit?
And what shall thy soul say when it wakes and knows
The work was left undone for which it came?
Or is this all for thy being born on earth
Charged with a mandate from eternity,

....

To pass and leave unchanged the old dusty laws?
Shall there be no new tables, no new Word,
No greater light come down upon the earth
Delivering her from her unconsciousness,
Man's spirit from unalterable fate?

....

Is this then the report that I must make,
My head bowed with shame before the Eternal's seat,—
His power he kindled in thy body has failed,
His labourer returns, her task undone?"

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VII, Canto II, pp. 475-76)

"I am concerned with the earth, not with worlds beyond for their own sake; it is a terrestrial realisation that I seek and not a flight to distant summits."

(Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, p. 124)

TRANCE-experiences are undoubtedly of great value in the pursuit of the spiritual goal as ordinarily understood, and the Nirvikalpa Samadhi taken in the specific sense in which the term is used, no doubt represents a supreme height of realisation that a seeker may aspire after. Naturally enough, this most elevated trance-state proves to be adequate if the goal is to pass away into the Superconscient and not to bring down the Power and

Glory of the Supercoscient into our normal waking consciousness. But Samadhi experiences cannot suffice in the least for the object of our Yoga of Transformation; for, our goal is no less than the dynamic divinisation of our total existence including the outermost parts of Pradriti. To be more specific, viewed from the perspective off *our* spiritual goal — the goal of embodying and manifesting the highest spiritual consciousess here upon earth itself — the trance-solution for the actual imperfe tions of our world-existence suffers, among others, from the following deficiencies:

(i) The supreme trance-state represents a state of consciousness or rather superconsciousness to which only a rare few can ordinarily attain. Thus, it has got no general validity so far as the goal of a wide-based terrestrial realisation is concerned.

(ii) Even when attained, there is no return for the majority of seekers from this supreme height of spiritual consciousness. It is only the exceptionaily gifted Iswarakotis or "divine souls" who succeed in coming back to the waking state.

Cf. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. VI, p. 499:

"When once they [ordinary Sadhakas] somehow attain to the direct realisation of Brahman, they cannot again come back to the lower plane of material perception. They melt away in Brahman — *ksire niravat* — like water in milk."

So the question of the divinisation of the waking existence becomes otiose and irrelevant.

(iii) Traditionally, it is averred that even those rare few who happen to return from the supreme state can do so only through the intermediary of a trace of ego and desires. Hence a certain "lowering of the key" becomes unavoidable which places it at a remove form the perfect divine realisation we aspire after.

Cf. Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. VI, 1p. 140:

"The conclusion of the Vedanta is that when there is absolute Samadhi and cessation of all modifications, there is no return from that state; as the Vedanta aphorism says: *anavrtti savdat........* But the Avatars *cherish a few desires* for the good of the world. *By taking hold of that thread they come down* from the superconscious to the conscious state." (Italics ours)

Narration his own personal experience the Swami says in the same context:

"I had just a *trace of the feeling of Ego, so I could again return* to the world of relativity from the Samadhi." (*Ibid.*, p. 139). (Italics ours)

(iv) In a more general way we may state that if the entry into the higher reaches of our being is effected only in the absorbed superconscient state of trance, the experience cannot become real to the whole existence, being valid only for a remote part of it. Thus it militates against our goal of the complete spiritualisation of the totality of our existence.

(v) The Yogic trance helps us to fix the spiritual experiences in our inner consciousness alone; it cannot automatically lead to the spiritualisation of the outer waking consciousness. so for us who aim at a total spiritual and supramental change, even, and in particular, of the outer parts of our Nature, Samadhi as an instrumentation proves to be altogether inadequate and futile.

(vi) Because of the aforesaid inability to exercise anything but a relative and moderate elevation influence on the outer consciousness, it so happens that when the Samadhi ceases, the thread is broken and the soul returns once again to the "distractions and imperfections of the outward life."

As a matter of fact, since one cannot continually remain in the trance-state, while leading an embodied existence, *vyutthāna*or the "return" from the superconscious state becomes unavoidable, and with this *vyutthāna* "the lower consciousness from which the ascent took place falls back to what it was, withe

only the addition of an unkept or a remembered but no longer dynamic experience."

It is because of this persistence of the disabilities of the waking mentality even after attainment of Samadhi that it is sometimes asserted that an absolute eradication of Ignorance or a complete ascension of consciousness from the "mortal mentality" become feasible only when the body and the bodily life cease to function at death. (Cf. *Yoga-Shikhopanishad*, I. 163: *pendapātena yā muktih sā muktirna tu hanyate.*)

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that trance-experiences may be all right so far as the traditional Yogas are concerned; for, after all, according to them the true bondage is the very process of birth the liability of the individual to rebirth in this "unhappy transient world" (*anityamasukham lokam*). Liberation achieved through the attainment of the knowledge of Reality should therefore have for its practical consiequence the definitive stoppage of this cyclic process off birth-death-rebirth.

And if this is so, if the cessation from embodied existence is considered to be the *summum bonum*, one need concentrate only on an inner realisation of the inner Divine and not bother oneself with the possibility or otherwise of an integral terrestrial realisation. Also, the body, although initially a necessary instrument for the realisation of our spiritual destiny (*sariramādyam khalu dharmasādhanam*), may be allowed to disintegrate once that goal is achieved. (Cf. Sri Ramakrishna: "Take out the thorn with the help of a thorn"; and *Yoga-Vasishtha*: "Renounce that with which you renounce" (*yena tyajasi tam tyaja*).

But this can by no means be our attitude to the body and bodily life. For the Integral Yoga has for its objective:

(i) to make spiritual experiences real to the whole consciousness including that of the outer being;

(ii) to establish the highest possible realisation in the waking state and make it endure there;

(iii) not only to experience the Truth subjectively and in one's inner consciousness alone, but to manifest it even in full activity;

(iv) an integral possession of the integrality of the Divine in the life of this world and not only beyond it.

In short, in the words of Sri Aurobindo: "It is the object of my yoga to transform life by bringing down into it the Light, Power and Bliss of the Divine Truth and its dynamic certitudes. This Yoga is not a yoga of world-shunning asceticism, but of divine life....It aims at a change of life and existence, not as something subordinate of incidental, but as a distinct and central object."

Elsewhere Sri Aurobindo points out that "not only must the mind be able to rise in abnormal states out of itself into a higher consciousness, but its *waking mentality also miust be entirely spiritualised.*"

This then is our goal, and hence trance-experiences *alone* cannot help us much in achieving our objective. Moreover the Samadhi state as ordinarily realised suffers from another great disability which may not be considerer as such when viewed from the standpoint of the goal of th traditional world-shunning Yogas but certainly so from our point of view. This is as regrads the absence of any conscious memory of the trance-experience when one returns to the waking mentality again.

As a matter of fact the aim of the old Yoga is to pass away into the Superconscient and not to bring back its dynamic riches to the waking outer existence with a view to effectuate a spiritual transformation ther. Hence, as soon as the Yogin goes above the level of the spiritual mind, he does not seek to retain any continuity of awareness there; instead, he passes into the "mystic sleep" of Samadhi, a state of superconsciousness in which the humam mind in its actually evolved condition cannot remain awake even with what has been termed the " inner waking" and hence passes into "the blank incomprehension and non-recep-

tion of slumber." And as a result, because of the gulf of oblivion, the spiritual experiences of the superconscient trance-state lose all their dynamic value for the waking consciousness.

But this disability has to be remedied. Since we seek to bring down the Superconscient into our normal waking consciousness, we must somehow bridge the gulf, heighten and intensify our spiritual awakening even in the normally superconscient reaches of being and train our consciousness to bring back in full the dynamic memory "from the inner to the outer waking."

In this connection we feel tempted to reproduce *in extenso* what the Mother said in reply to the question "Is the state of trance or Samadhi a sign of progress?"

"To enter into Samadhi is to pass into a state of which no conscious memory remains on awakening.

"In ancient times this was considered as a very high condition. It was even thought that it was the sign of a great realisation. ....I have read in all kinds of so-called spiritual literratue marvellous things about this state of trance of Samadhi; and it happened that I had never had it. I did not know if it was a sign of inferiority. And when I arrived here [at Pondicherry], one of my first questions to Sri Aurobindo was, 'What do you think of Samadhi, this state of trace which one does not remember? One enters into a condition which seems to be blissfull but when one comes out of it one never knows what happened.' He looked at me, he saw what I meant and told me, 'It is unconsciousness. ... Yes, one enters into what is called Samadhi, when one comes out of one's conscious being and enters into a part of one's being which is completely unconscious or rather into a domain where one has no corresponding consciousness — one goes beyond the field of one's consciousness and enters into a region where one has no more consciousness. One is in the impersonal state. That is why naturally one remembers nothing, because one has not been conscious of anything'.....

"So you have the reply. *The sign of progress is when there*

is no more unconsciousness, when you can rise to the same regions without entering into a trance."

At the time of the publication of thes Talk, the Mother added the following remark:

"There are people who enter into domains where they have a consciousness, but between this conscious state and their normal wakeful consciousnes there is a *gap*: their individuality does not exist between the waking state and th deeper state; then *in the passage they forget.* They cannot carry the consciousness they had there into the consciousness here because there is a gap between the two. There is even an occult discipline which consists in building the intermediary fields, so that one may be able to remember things."

But even this does not suffice for our goal. For what we aim at is not the conscious bringing back of the impressions, the reproting back to the waking consciousness, in transcriptions more or less perfect, what one experiences in states at present superconscient to it: we want instead an integral supramental transformation of the waking existence itself. In the luminous words of Sri Aurobindo:

"If the control of [the] highest spiritual being is to be brought into our waking life, there must be *a conscious heightening and widening* into immense ranges of new being, new consciousness, new potentialities of action, a taking up — as integral as possible — of our *present* being, consciousness, activities and a transmutation of them into divine values which would effect a transfiguration of our human existence. For wherever a radical transition has to be made, there is always this triple movement, — ascent, widening of field and base, integration..."

So we see that in order to have a divinely transformed waking existence, and ascension to the trance-state or even the building up of a conscious bridge between that and the waking state is not enough. Something much more revolutinary is needed: let us se what.

Chapter-3

The Critique of the 'Jivanmukti-Solution'

Chapter-3

***T**he Passage describes the state of consciousness when one is aloof from all things even when in their midst and all is felt to be unreal, an illusion. There are then no preferences or desires because things are too unreal to desire or to prefer one to another. But, at the same time, one feels no necessity to flee from the world or not to do any action, because being free from the illusion, action or living in the world does not weigh upon one, one is not bound or involved.*

(Sri Aurobindo, Letters on Yoga, pp. 682-83)

When one sees a mirage for the first time, he mistakes it for a reality, and after vainly trying to quench his thirst in it, learns that it is a mirage. But whenever he sees such a phenomenon in future, in spite of the apparent reality, the idea that he sees a mirage always presents itself to him. So is the world of Maya to a Jivanmukta (the liberated in life)

(Swami Vivekananda, *Collected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 104)

I am neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Actions have I none, past or present or future. I possess no body nor does bodylessness characterise my state. How can I say what is mine and what is not?

(Dattatreya, *Avadhuta-Gita*, 1.66)

We have seen in the previous chapter why the Yogic trance even if it be of the supreme sort, the Nirvikalpa Samadhi, fail to meet the demands of the Yoga of Transformation. As a matter of fact what we envisage for our goal is very much wider in base, far superior in scope and loftier in its flight than the attainments offered by the Nirvikalpa trance. In Sri Aurolindo's own words, "the realisation of this yoga is not lower but higher than Nirvana

or Nirvikalpa Samadhi," For, we do not want to be satisfied with inner psycho-spiritual experiences alone, we seek too the total and complete realisation of the Divine in the outer conscious-ness and in the life of action.

But the detractor may interject at this point: "The waking realisatgion that you are aiming at—has it not been already pos-sessed by those who have been variously termed *jivanmukta* ('liberated while still leading a bodily life'), *sthitaprajña* ('estab-lished in the true Knoweldge and Wisdom), ativarn āsrami ('be-yond all standards of conduct') or *brahmavid* ('one who has known and become the Brahman1)?" — the implication of the question being that there is after all nothing essentially new in the ideal we pursue.

But a little reflection will suffice to show that the Jivanmukti realisation or realisations of the same *genre* fall far short of the goal of dividnised waking physical existence that is the object of our own Yoga. After all, who is a Jivanmukta? And what es-sentially characterises his comportment vis-a-vis this world of dynamic manifestation? For a suitable answer let us fall back upon three citations, chosen at random from amongst a host of others and culled from ancient texts as well as from those of our day.

First from the great Monistic text *Yoga-Vasishtha Ramayana:*

"The Jivanmukta is one to whose consciousness only the undifferentiated Vyoma exists and this phenomenal world has lost all reality, although his organs may appear to function as before.... He maintains his body with whatever little comes to it naturally and effortlessly... He is called a Jivanmukta who is no more awake to the world of senses although his sense-organs appear to be awake as ever.... He who has transcended the ego-sense and does not get involved in action is indeed a Jivanmukta whether he is active or not."

Now from Sri Ramakrishna: "He who has attained this knowl-

edge of Brahman is a Jivanmukta, liberated while living in the body. He rightly understand that the Atman and the body are two separate things.... These two are separate like the kernel and the shell of the coconut while its milk dries up. The Atman moves, as it were, within the body.... The kernel of a green almond or betel-nut cannot be separated from the shell; but when they are ripe the juice dries up and the kernel separates from the shell. After the attainment of Knoweldge of Brahman, the 'milk' of worldly-mindedness dires up."

Finally a long excerpt from Swami ;Vivekananda: ... He has reached the perfection which the Advaitist wants to attain; *and at that moment*...the veil of ignorance fall away from him, and he will feel his own nature. Even in this life, he will feel that he is one with the universe. For *a time*, as it were, the whole of this phenomenal world will disappear for him, and he will realise what he is. But *so long as the Karma of this body remains, he will have to live.* This state, when the veil has vanished and yet the body remains for some time, is what the Vedantist call Jivan-mukti, the living freedom. If a man is deluded by a mirage for some time and one day the mirage disappears-if it comes back again next day or at some future time, he *will not be deluded.* Before the mirage first broke, the man could not distinguish between the reality and the deception. But when it has once broken, as long as he has organs and eyes to work with, he will see the image, but will no more be deluded. That fine distinction between the actual world and the mirage, he has caught, and the latter cannot delude him any more. So when the Vedantist has realised his own nature, the whole world has vanished for him. *It will come back again, but no more the same world...*

The above three excerpts purporting to characterise the sta-tus of a Jivanmukta make it abundantly clear that *prima facie* Jivanmukti in the specific sense in which it is generally under-stood can be" by no means measure up to our ideal of the di-vinely dynamic transformation of the whole of our waking exist-

ence. But before we pass the final judgment it would be better for us to examine, in however brief a manner, some of the principal traits of the Jivanmukti-realisation.

Jivanmukti and Videhamukti: Jivanmukti is never considered to be *the* goal in itself; it is, so to say, no more than a stopgap arrangement, wayside inn, - the ultimate goal, the goal *par excellence*, being always *videhamukti* or the liberation that is attained with the dissolution of the body. But this *videhamukti* or disembodied liberation" is sought to be effected in two stages: the first stage, the penultimate attainment as it were, is reached when through the gaining of the true Knowledge of Reality of one's own being as well as of the world-existence, the propensity to future births in this phenomenal universe is altogether stamped out; the second and final stage being the drop ping off of the current body-formation and the attainment to the status of *videhamukti*. Jivanmukti represents the status of that seeker who has already attained Self-Knowledge but is still leading the present bodily life awaiting the day when this will cease for good and he will become "liberated in bodylessness" *(videhamukta)*

It follows then that the Jivanmukti status is the more valued the more it approaches the character of Videhamukti even while the Siddha is still is his body. So the divine transformation of the bodily existence has here no relevance at all. As a matter of fact, the famous Vidyaranya Muni, one of the reputed authors of the Monistic Work *Panchadashi,* wrote a full treatise on Jivanmukti, called Jivanmukti - Viveka, only to prove at the end that after all Videhamukti is the *sum mum bonum* and Jivanmukti is a step towards this supreme goal.

But if this so, the question arises: why, then, even after the attainment of Self-Realisation, should the Siddha agree at all to remain for some time in the body in the Jivanmukti status and not pass immediately and directly into Videhamukti, when the latter is the real objective sought after? The answer that is generally offered is in terms of the Theory of Karma which we have

already discussed in Chapter I. Since Prarabdha Karmas (that is to say, those that have started bearing their fruits) have produced our present body and since these cannot be in fructified except through their exhaustion by sufferance, even on the attainment of liberation, the body may continue to remain viable for some time, but for some time only. When the Prarabdhas are over, the body automatically disintegrates and the Jivanmukti status gives place to Videhamukti.

Thus the Jivanmukti realisation appears almost as the virtue of a necessity and the waking physical existence in this phenomenal universe cannot be considered in this view to be a field specially worthy of spiritualisation.

In order to substantiate the points that we have made above, we adduce below a few observations drawn from different sources.

"...After realising that state described in the scriptures, the saint sees the Self in all beings and in that consciousness devotes himself to service, so that *any Karma that was yet left to be worked out thought the body may exhaust itself.* It is this state which has been described by the authors of the Shastras (scriptures) as Jivanmukti, 'Freedom while living'."

(Italics ours)

(Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works,* Vol. VII. pp. 112-113).

A Devotee: 'Does the body remain even after the realization of God?'

Master: 'The body survives with some so that they may work out their Prarabdha Karma or work for the welfare of others.... Of course, he...*escapes future births* which would otherwise be necessary for reaping the results of his past Karma. His present body remains alive as long as its momentum is not exhausted; but future births are no longer possible. *The wheel moves so*

long as the impulse that has set it in motion lasts. Then it comes to a stop.'"

(Italics ours)

(*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 431

"The ultimate liberation [from the chain of births] is attained with the dawning of the Knowledge itself.." (*"jñāanasamakālamutah kaivalyam yāti"* : Sheshacharya, *Paramārthasāra or Aryapañcāsiti*, 81).

"Once a Jivanmukta, one has no more future births". *("bhñyojanmavinirmuktam jivanmuktasya tanmanah" : Yoga-Vāsistha* Upashama-Prakarana, 90.18).

"He that has Knowledge...reaches that goal whence he is not born again" *("yastu vijñānavān* bhavati...sa tu tatpadam*āpnoti* vasm*ād* bhñyo no *jāyate":* Katha-Upanisad, *III.8).*

"Even after attaining to the status f Jivanmukta, one continues for a while to remain in his body, merely toexhaust the mementum of the Prarabdha" *("prārabdhakarmavegena*jivanmukto yad*ā* bhavet. Kañcit *kālamathārabdhakarmavandhasya sanksaye":*

Shankaracharya, *Vākyavrtti, 52).*

"He has to wait [for his Videhamukti] only so long as he is not released from his body. At the fall ofthe body he attains to the supreme status" *("tasya tāvadeva* ciram *yāvanna* vimokse atha sampatsye": Ch*āndogya-Upanisad, 6.14.2).*

"Once the Prarabdhas are experienced and gone through, one acquires the supreme liberation" (*bhogena tvitare ksapayitvā* sampadyate": *Vyasa, Brahmasñtra, 4.1.19).*

"Once the body gets consumed by Time, the Knower leaves his status of Jivanmukti and enters into the state of Videhamukti" (*jivanmuktapadam tyaktvā* svadehe *kālasātkrte*, visatyadehamuktatvam": Yoga-V*āsistha*, II. 9.14.)

"When he takes up his abode in it, he grieves not, but when he is set free from it, that is his deliverance"1 (*"anusthāya na socati vimuktasca vimucyate": Katha-Upanisad,* V.I.)

"The Jivanmukta, even while he is still alive, has in reality no body atall" (*"jivato'pi asariratvam siddham"* :Shankar).

"The liberation that one gains at the fall of the body is indeed the highest one, for this liberation cannot be negatived any more" (*"pindapātena yā muktih sa muktirna tu hanyate": Yogasikhopanisad,* 1.163)

"At the fall of his body theYogi merges in his supreme self being, just as the space inside an ear then pot vanishes in the great cosmic Space, when the pot is broken and gone" (*ghate bhinne ghatākāsa, ākāse liyate yathā,* deh*ābhāve* tath*ā* yogi svarupe param*ātmani":* Dattatreya, *Avadhuta-Gitā,* 1.69)

"Once one attains to Videhamukti, there is no more return to this phenomenal world" (*"punarāvrttirahitam* kaivalyam pratipadyate": *Shankaracharya,* V*ākyavrtti).*

"There is more coming back for them" (*tesām* na punar*āvrttih":* Brhad*āranyaka* Upanisad, 6.2.15).

"No more wheeling in this human whirlpool" (*"imam mānavamāvartam* n*āvartante"*: Ch*āndogya Upanisad,* 8.15*)*.

It is clear from what goes before that, contrary to our own attitude to the body and physical existence, the Jivanmukti ideal does not attach much importance to any terrestrial realisation as such; it only tolerates the bodily life so long as it has to be borne and thus tries, if we may say so, make the best of a bad bargain.

But whatever be the nature of the ideal sought, how does a Jivanmukta behave so far as his waking state is concerned? Does his dynamic life satisfy the criterion of a divinely purposive and active physical existence? Here too the answer is an unambiguous NO

Jivanmukta and the Dynamic Waking State: The goal we envisage for our sadhana is, as we have stressed so many times before, is "not only to rise out of the ordinary ignorant world-consciousness into the divine consciousness, but to bring the supramental power of that divine consciousness down into the ignorance of mind, life and body, to transform them, to manifest the Divine here and create a divine life in Matter." It is thus almost an axiomatic truth that Yoga by works should form an indispensable part of our sadhana and an essential element of our realisation if we would seek to transplant the fullness of the spirit in the field of life and action., But the Jivanmukta does not in the least manifest this divine dynamis and thus does not measure up to our ideal.

As a matter of fact he is altogether indifferent to action (*kurvato' kurvatah*). For, although apparently still in his body, the Jivanmukta does not really participate in any of its workings. The world still appears before him, but he is no longer deceived by what he would call its *māyā*. Indeed he looks upon his body "as if a corpse separated from his Self" ("*svavapuh kunapamiva drsyate yatastadvapurapadhvastam*": *Paramachmsa-Upanisad*).

The result is that a Jivanmukta is indifferent to his bodily life. "Just as a person intoxicated with liquor is altogether oblivious of the absence or otherwise of his dress, so is the Jivanmuka of the stateand location of his ephemeral body. Whether the body remains stationary at a place or gets displaced from there or even stumbles down is equal to him." Also, "the Brahmavid does never remember his body. It continues to be maintained by the Life breath, *prāna-vāyu,* just as a trained horse goes on pulling the cart as ever even when the driver has withdrawn all his attention."

Thus the bodily mechanism of a Jivanmukta may indeed continue to function because of the gathered force of Prakriti and he may apparently walk and speak and behave as before, but all this is like an empty machine in no way supported by any participating consciousness. The liberated spirit witnesses these action (Sāksyaham) but does not take part them *("ksiyante cāsya karmāni: Yoga-sikhopanisad,* IV,45). There is no sense of personal action (*no kurve nāpi kāraye)* hence for the Jivanmukta there is no bondage or responsibility (*na sa mudhavallipyate; mamākarturalepasya).*

As a matter of fact, it is the organs of sense and action that become automatically active for the continued maintenance of the body (*cak surādindriyam svatah pravartate vahihsvārthe*) and the Jivanmukta himself living all the while "in communion of oneness with the Transcendent" seems to the outward eye to be acting as a somanbulist (*suptabuddhavat*). For "although he has eyes, he acts as the eyeless; although he has ears, he acts as the earless; although he has speech, he acts as the speechless; and although he has life, he acts as the lifeless.'"

Thus there cannot be any dynamically purposive action in the life of a Jivanmukta. He participates, if at all, only in simple innocuous action meant solely for the upkeep of the body (*kevalam sāiram karma*), or in those which are occasioned byhis previous Samskaras (*"purvācārakramāgatam ācāramācaranti"*) or at the most in those apparently significant actions which are brought about not through his personal initiation but only through the agency of the Prarabdha *(yathāprāptam hi kartyavyam, kuru kāryam yathāgatam).*

The foregoing analysis shows unmistakably that Jivanmukti as traditionally conceived cannot at all be equated to our ideal. What we aim at is something radically different from this status of inner liberation.

Chapter-4

The Issue: Status or Dynamis

Chapter-4

I have met Spirit with spirit, Self with self,
But I have loved too the body of my god.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book X, Canto IV, p. 649)

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become life divine

*(Ibid.,*Book XI, Canto I, p. 711)

Eternal status and eternal dynamis are both true of the Reality which itself surpasses both status and dynamis; the immobile and the mobile Brahman are both ;the same Reality.

(Sir Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, p. 459)

We have...to possess consciously the active Brahman without losing possession of the silent Self. We have a preserve the inner silence, tranquility, passivity as a foundation; but in place of an aloof indifference to the works of the active Brahman we have to arrive at an equal and impartial delight in them; in place of a refusal to participate lest our freedom and peace be lost we have to arrive at a conscious possession of the active Brahman whose joy of existence does not abrogate His peace, nor His lordship of all workings impair His calm freedom in the midst of His works.

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 389)

The discussion in the preceding chapter has made the point clear that since our Yoga aims at the realisation of the Divine in the outer consciousness and life as well as in the inner one, the Jivanmukta with his aloof indifference to or at the best a benevolent tolerance for the dynamic waking existence can never be our ideal.

But what are after all the essential difficulties of spiritual realisation on the gross physical plane? Why is the life of action and creation viewed with so much misgiving by most of the traditional. spiritual seekers? What makes our present worldly existence apparently so incorrigible in its nature as to induce even Sri Krishna, the propounder of the gospel of divine action, to almost admit at the end that to shun this transient and unhappy world in perhaps after all the best possible solution?

Ana what about that wonderful dynamic sain Swami Vivekananda? Did he not at the end give the simile of a god's tail in order to represent the impossibility of transformation? Alas, straighten it as much as you like, but release it- and the moment after, the wretched thing becomes curled again! It looks almost an irony of situation that this dynamic personality who did not flinch to declare in the earlier part of his Yogic life:

"I have lost all wish for my salvation, may I be born again and again and suffers thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls,-and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship."

-should almost abdicate and confess just two years before his passing away:

"I have bundled my thing and am waiting of the great deliverer.

"Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore/

"After all, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature: works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking-love dying, *work becoming tasteless*- the glamour is off life. Only the voice of the Master is calling. - I come Lord, I come'. 'Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou me.'-'I come, my beloved Lord, I come.'

"Yes, I come Nirvana is before me: I feel it at times-the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath...

"The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting; *I am drifting again*-with the bright warm sun ahead and masses of vegetation around-and in the heat everything is so still, so still, so calm-and I am drifting languidly - in the warm heart of the river! *I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet-for fear of breaking the marvilous stillness,* still ness that makes you feel sure it is an *illusion.*

"Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst for power! Now they are vanishing, and I drift. I come! Mother, I come! In Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, into he wonderland, I come-a *spectator, no more an actor."*

Are then actions and creations such great binding elements as to be obligatorily left out at the end? Did not Sri Ramakrishna give the image of a pregnant woman whose work-load diminishes day by day?

But the difficulty experienced by a spiritual seeker in guarding the peace of the silent Self while engaged in dynamics activity is more incidental then intrinsic. It arises out of the mental being's exclusive concentration on its "plane of pure existence in which consciousness is at rest in passivity and delight of existence at rest in peace of existence." Because of this exclusiveness, when the Mind seeks at times to ally itself to action, in the absence of adequate preparation it plunges headlong into the old obscuring movement of force instead of exercising a conscious mastery over it.

It is because of this ignorant relapse brought about by the dynamic play that the mental Purusha is so ready to condemn all action and dynamism,. To its judgment, all dynamism must be foreign to the supreme nature of the Absolute whose only true and whole bring must be a status silent and immutable, featureless and quiescent. Thus cancelling the dynamis of Brahman, the Mind goes on to assert that this supreme Reality can at all be realised only through a consciousness that has itself fallen nonactive and silent and, what is more, "liberation must destroy all possibility of mental or bodily living and annihilate the individual existence for ever in an impersonal infinity."

But we shall presently see that none of the foregoing assumptions is absolutely valid. As a matter of fact, all the difficulty disappears if along with the plane of pure existence one can embrace the plane of conscious force of existence, the Chit-Tapas, of Sachchidananda, in which "consciousness is active as power and will and delight is active as joy of existence."

And this is possible. Because Brahman itself is integral, It has an active aspect as well asa static one and both are equally real. The integral realisation demands the realisation of Sachchidananda in both His aspects, in the aspect in which He is "sovereign, free, lord of things, acting out of an inalienable calm pouring itself out in infinite action and quality out of an eternal self-concentration, the one supreme Person holding in himself all this play of personality in a vast equal impersonality, possessing the infinite phenomenon of the universe without attachment but without any inseparable aloofness, with a divine mastery and an innumerable radiation of his eternal luminous self-delight - as a manifestation which he holds, but by which he is not held, which he governs freely and by which therefore he is not bound." -as well as in that in which He is "silent passive quietistic, self absorbed, self-sufficient,...one, impersonal, without play of qualities, turned away from the infinite phenomenon of the universe or viewing it with indifference and without participation."

We have said that the eternal status of being as well as the eternal movement of being are both real of the supreme Reality. But the question arises: can these two statuses co-exist? Are these *simultaneously* realisable? Or, rather, one has to withdraw from one of the statuses in order to realise the other, so much so that, depending on the status on which one concentrates at the moment, one of these may appear to be the inertia of repose while the other the inertia of mechanical repetition of movement.

An integral spiritual realisation affirms that the eternal status and the eternal dynamis are not only both *real* but they are also *simultaneous*, 'The status admits of action of dynamis and the action does not abrogate the status.' Thus "all that is in he kinesis, the movement, the action, the creation, is the Brahman; the becoming is a movement of the being; Time is a manifestation of the Eternal. All is one Being, one Consciousness, one even in infinite multiplicity, and there is no need to bisect it into an opposition of transcendent Reality and unreal cosmic May."

But the difficulty is that it is often trenchantly asserted as a *fact of spiritual experience* that the Reality is indeed featureless and immutable and the universe of manifestation is brought about by the illusionary Maya-Power of the Supreme. Although this assertion that the only active Power the absolute Truth possesses is that of creating illusion and falsehood and 'dissolving' them in turn lacks in vraisimilitude, the rejoinder is made that this is not a question of vraisemblance or no, nor is it an issue that can be settled by means of logical validation or otherwise, for this is the ineffable mystery of Maya *(anirvacaniyā)* not to be comprehended by reason or mind.

And this position is sound indeed. For, whatever the merits or demerits, the strong or weak points, of a particular philosophical formulation, the spiritual experience that it seeks to represent remains in itself eternally valid and can only be integrated

in the compass of another experience much more wide and much more lofty. For, as Sri Aurobindo has so forcefully pointed out, 'a single decisive spiritual experience may undo a whole edifice of reasoning and conclusions erected by the logical intelligence."

So, instead of engaging in sterile intellectual debates, in this matter of the reality or otherwise of the dynamis of the Absolute, let us listen to Sri Aurobindo describing his own personal spiritual realisation:

"The solution of the matter must rest not upon logic, but upon a growing, ever heightening, widening spiritual experience-an experience which must of course include or have passed through that of Nirvana nad Maya, *otherwise it would not be complete and would have no decisive value.*

"Now to reach Nirvana was the first radical result of my own Yoga. It threw me suddenly into a condition above and without through, unstained by any mental or vital movement; there was no *ego, no real world-* only when one looked through the immobile senses, something perceived or bore upon its sheer silence a world of empty forms, *materialised shadows without true substance.* There was no One or many even, only just absolutely That, featureless, relationless, sheer, indescribable, unthinkable, absolute, yet supremely real and *solely real.* This was no mental realisation nor something glimpsed somewhere above,-no abstraction,-it was positive, *the only positive reality*-although not a spatial physical world pervading, occupying or rather flooding and drowning this semblance of a physical world, leaving no room or space for any reality but itself, allowing nothing else to seem at all actual, positive or substantial... What it [the experience] brought was an inexpressible Peace, a stupendous Silence, an infinity of release and freedom. I lived in that Nirvana day and night before it began to admit other things into itself or modify itself at all, and the inner heart of experience, a constant memory of it and its power to return remained until in the end

it began to disappear *into a greater Super consciousness from above.* But meanwhile realisation added itself to realisation and fused itself with this original experience. At an early stage *the aspect of an illusionary world gave place to one* in which illusion is only a small surface phenomenon with an immense Divine Reality behind it and a supreme Divine Reality above it and an intense Divine Reality in the heart of everything that had seemed at first only a cinematic shape or shadow. And this was *no reimprisonment in the sense, no diminution or fall* from supreme experience, it cam rather as a constant heightening and widening of the Truth; it was the Spirit that saw objects, not the senses, and the Peace, the Silence, the freedom in Infinity remained always with the world or all worlds only as a continuous incident in the timeless eternity of the Divine.

"..Nirvana in my liberated consciousness turned out to be the beginning of my realisation, *a first step towards the complete thing,* not the sole true attainment possible or even a culminating finale."

The world is thus real, the Becoming is as real as the Being, the dynamis of Sachchidananda is as much a spiritual fact as His immobile status. Indeed, the Divine does not contain all only in 'a transcendent consciousness. He is the one Self of all, *sarvabhātāntarātma,* He is the All, *vāsudeva sarvam,* not merely in the 'unique essence' but in the manifold names and forms. "All the soul-life, mental, vital, bodily existence of all that exists [is] one indivisible movement and activity of the Being who is the same for ever." "All is one Being, one consciousness, one even in infinite multiplicity,."

Thus action and creation cannot in the very nature of things be incompatible with the perfect and total realisation of the Supreme; a really dynamic living cannot go counter to the attainment of the supreme status of being; for "all that is in kinesis, the movement, the action, the creation is Brahman."

Granted that Brahman has two aspects equally real, equally true: an active one as well as a passive one. Granted that there is ample theoretical justification why the two aspects can be simultaneously embraced and realised. But still the question remains: Why is it that "*in experience* we find that...it is, normally, a quiescence that brings in the stable realisation of the eternal and the infinite: it is in silence or quietude that we feel most firmly the Something that is behind the world shown to us by our mind and senses.?"

It is thus reasoned that, *in practice* if not in theory, all action, all creation, all determining perception must in their very nature limit and obscure the stable realisation, and hence these have to diminish and disappear if we would seek to enter the indivisible consciousness of the Real.

Here too, as well shall presently see, the reasoning is fallacious. For it is not dynamism as such that binds and involves the soul of the seeker; it is the intrinsic incapacity of our mind-consciounsess that is at the root of the trouble.

Chapter-5

The mind-Consciousness : its achievements and Failures

Chapter-5

A black veil has been lifted; we have seen
The mighty shadow of the omniscient Lord;
But who has lifted up the veil of light
And who has seen the body of the King?

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book III, Canto II, p. 311)

It is certain that you won't be able to know the Atman through the mind. You have to go beyond the mind. As there is no instrument beyond the mind-for only the Atman exists there-there the object of knowledge becomes the same as the instrument of knowledge....It is therefore that the Shruti says, 'Vijnātārāmāre kena vijāniyāt-Though what are you to know the Eternal Subject?

(Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 142)

If the Minds were the last word and there were nothing beyond it except the pure Spirit, I would not be averse to accepting it [Mayavad with its sole stress on Nirvana] as the only way out.. But my experience is that there is something beyond mind; Mind is not the last word here of the Spirit...There is a Truth-Consciousness, not static only and self-introspective, but also dynamic and creative...

(Sri Aurobino, *On Himself*, p. 103)

We have seen that for the seeker of the Integral Yoga the realisation of the 'passive Brahman' , of the pure quiescent self-existence independent of all world-play, cannot be more than the necessary first basis. We cannot rest with an utter withdrawal in consciousness from the universal manifestation. We must instead return upon the world of action and creation and seek to

repossess and remould our mind, life and body with the luminous dynamis of the 'active Brahman' and identify ourselves, freely and in the infinite self-delight of the Being, with all the outpouring of Chit-Tapas, of Consciousness and its creative Force, in Time and in Space.

But the goal is easier stated than realised. For, almost on universal evidence, any great stress of dynamism generally obscures the inner vision, brings in a relative loss of the Peace and Silence of the soul, and otherwise tends to lower the status of spiritual attainment.

But his disability arises from the fact that attempts to possess the active Brahman have so far been made exclusively though the Mind-consciousness. And since Mind, the great divider, suffers from some intrinsic and irremediable limitation these attempts have been fore doomed to failure.

But the question may be raised: since Mind, in the actually evolved existence, is the highest possible instrument available and since there is no other still higher organised power through which to realise the Self or Brahman or to possess divinely the world, is it not almost axiomatic that the transformation of our dynamic waking existence as we envisage in our sadhana is an impossible proposition?

Of course, if the above assumption is correct, the liberation and transformation of our embodied existence would be impossible here upon earth, and instead of running after the *ignis fatuus* it would be more sensible to pass away into Superconscient and not to seek to bring down the Superconscient into the field of our waking consciousness.

As a matter of fact, this has been so far the general trend. For "in the ordinary Yoga...it is only necessary to recognise two planes of our consciousness, the spiritual and materialised mental; the pure reason standing between these tow views them both, cuts through the illusions of the phenomenal world, exceeds the materialised mental plane, sees the reality of the spiritual; and then the will of the individual Purusha unifying itself with this poise knowledge rejects the lower and draws back to the supreme plane, dwells there, loses mind and body, sheds life from it and merges itself in the supreme Purusha, is delivered from individual existence."

But a deeper and higher spiritual exploration reveals the fact that the above assumption is not correct after all. Mind is not the highest principle of cosmic existence, with only the pure Spirit, the Impersonal Absolute beyond itself. As a matter of fact, there is a hierarchy of superior principle far transcending the normal mind consciousness and consequently at present superconscient to it. A supreme Truth-Consciousness, Rita-Chit, which Sri Aurobindo terms as Supermind, tops the series and this is a Power not merely static and introspective but supremely dynamic and creative. It is this Supermind that must be consciously possessed and made to descend into our earth-nature if we would have a transformed waking existence. Otherwise static release remains the sole possibility before the spiritual seeker.

Unfortunately, the knowledge of the existence of these supernal planes of our being has been almost lost to the spiritual memory of the race with all the adverse consequences attendant upon it. In ancient lore, "in the Upanishad (usually the Taittirya) there are some indications of these higher planes and their nature and the possibility of gathering up the whole consciousness and rising into them. But this was forgotten afterwards and people spoke only of the Buddhi as the highest thing with the Purusha or Self just above, but there was no clear idea of these planes."

Now, so long as these higher spiritual planes of the mentle being and finally the plane of Supermind are not consciously possessed and made active and organised in the normal consciousness of the embodied being, so long as the spiritualised mind approaches the Supreme directly and not passing through this Truth-Consciousness, the supramental Gnosis, one is bound to experience difficulties from the point of view of the realisation

of our goal, both in the mind's ascent and in its attempted realisation of the active Brahman.

Let us have a bird's-eye view of some of the more salient difficulties encountered and, at the same time, of the achievements of Mind as well as of its failures.

The Ascent and Illusoriness: If Mind is taken to be the highest possible cosmic principle, since the Absolute is not seizable by the mind-consciousness, the seeker of the traditional Yogas tries to get away from the mortal failings of mind into the superconscient Infinite, by shedding all its activities find formations, making a blank of it and finally 'engulfing it is in the Unmanifest,' *param avyaktam.*

In this progressive withdrawal from mind-consciounsess, the sadhak comes to realise the *Sad-Atman,* the "pure, still, self-aware existence, one undivided, peaceful, active, undisturbed by the action of the world."

Although this Sad-Atman is the unique Origin and Sustainer of everything, *sarvani hyetad brahma,* being itself passive, the only relation it appears to have with this world of manifestation is that of "a disinterested Witness not at all involved in or affected even touched by any of its activities."

When one pushes farther this state of consciousness, one comes to realise 'an aloof and transcendent Real Existence' appearing to have no connection or commerce at all with the world-existence.

When the mental being seeks to go still beyond, it negates yet further and arrives at an *Asat,* "a Void of everything that is here, a Void of unnameable peace and extinction of all, even of the Sat, even of that Existent which is the impersonal basis of individual or universal personality." It is this Asat arrived at by the absolute annulment of mind-existence and world-existence, that has been variously termed as Turiya or featureless and relation less Absolute by the monistic Vedantins, the Shunyam by

the nihilistic Madhyamika Buddhists, the Tao or omnipresent and transcendent Nihil by the Chinese, and as the indefinable and ineffable Permanent by the Mahayanists.

Many Christiian mystics too, notably St. John of the Cross with his doctrine of *noche obscure,* speak of 'a complete ignorance', ' a divine Darkness' through which the spirtualsied Mind has to pass before one can expect to attain to the supreme experience. And it s because of this incompatibility of mind-consciousness with the experience of the Absolute that so many systems of spiritual discipline have come to condemn the cosmic play. As a matter of fact, it is this very incompatibility that is at the basis of the Illusionist that "takes such firm hold of the human mind in its highest overleaping of itself."

If without any intermediate transitions, without awakening in the supernal reaches of our existence, of which we have already spoken, the Mind tries to take a short-cut and pass suddenly the 'gates of the Transcendent' where stands' the mere and perfect Spirit', the inactive Brahman, the transcendent Silence, a sense of utter unreality and illusory character of all cosmic existence seizes it in a most convincing and overwhelming experience. "The unverse and all that is...appears([then] to the mind as a dream more unsubstantial than any dream ever seen or imagined, so that even the word dream seems too positive a things to express its entire unreality."

But his universal Illusionism is not a *necessary* concomitant of the supreme spiritual experience. If instead of the mind's abrupt Samadhi-plunge into the mysic sleep state of *susupti* that is now superconscient and therefore inaccessible to it, one succeeds in acquiring spiritual wakefulness in the supernal states intervening between the Mind and the Spirit, one does not pass through the perception of an illusionary Maya, but rather has "the experience of the passage from Mind to what is beyond it so that our mental structure of the universe ceases to be valid and another reality of it is substituted for the ignorant mental knowl-

edge. In this transition it is possible to be awake to all the states of being together in a harmonised and unified expereince and to see the Reality every where."[2] Then we experience, as Sri Aurobindo has so beautifully put, that it is not an unreal or real-unreal universe that is reposing on a transcendent Reality, but a real universe reposing on a Reality at once universal and transcendent or absolute.

For even beyond the *avyaktam,* the Unmanifest, beyond the divine Darkness, *tamasah parastat,* is the Supreme One Existence, *ekam advaitam,* the Para Purusha who holds in His vast integral Reality the truth of cosmic consciousness as well as that of the Nirvana of world-consciousness. He is beyond the duality and the non-duality, *paratah parah.* and is *adityavarna* in contrast to the darkness of the Unmanifest. He is the light of lights, *jyotisam jyotih,* and lies in a supreme golden sheath, *hiranmaye pare kose.* Indeed, "the sun in the Yoga is the symbol of the supermind and the supermind is the first power of the Supreme which one meets across the border where the experience of spiritualised mind ceases and the unmodified divine consciousness begins the domain of the supreme Nature, *Para Prakrti.* It is that Light of which the Vedic mystics got a glimpse, and it is the opposite of the intervening darkness of the Christian mystics, for the supermind is all light and no darkness. To the mind the Supreme is *avyaktat param avyaktam,* but *if we follow the line leading to the supermind, it is an increasing affirmation rather than an increasing negation through which we move.*"

We have so far dwelt upon the disabilities that the mind-consciousness suffers from on its way of ascension to the summits of spiritual consciousness or rather superconsciousness. Now let us turn our gaze on the limitations that vitiate its attempt at complete possession of the active Brahman, when it seeks to return from the summit and embrace the life of action and creation.

The incomplete possession of the active Brahman: It is of course true that our normal consciousness, even at its waking moments, can become aware of Brahman through a process of inward concentration. But the point to note is that it is only the state and passive aspect of Brahman that is thus apprehended, not its active and dynamic side.

The result is that into return upon world-existence the mental being finds a wall of non-communication between the passive and the active Brahman and all dynamic activity appears to its stilled and inactive consciousness either as a hallucination or a dream, or like a puppet show, or even as a purely mechanical action brought about by the play of Prakriti without any active e partificpation of Purusha. The incommunicability may sometimes be so strong, the gulf separating the inner consciousness and the dynamic outer being so wide that to all outward appearance the seeker my a "move about like a thing inert in the hands of Nature, *jadavat* like a leaf in the wind, or otherwise[in] a state of pure happy and free irresponsibility of action, *balavat....* The outer being[may] live in a God-possessed frenzy careless of itself and the world, *unmattavat,* or with an entire disregard whether of the conventions and proprieties of fitting human action or of the harmony and rhythms of a greater Truth. It acts as the unbound vital being *pisacavat,* the divine maniac or else the divine demoniac."

But this sort of 'static possession by the Self' or 'the unregulated dynamic possession why the physical and vital Nature' is far removed from the goal of the Integral Yoga, for what we aim at is the "mastery of the Prakriti by the Purusha [and] the sublimation of Nature into her own supreme power, the infinite glories of the Para Shakti."

Confronted with this inability to participate actively in the dynamic manifestation without at the same time losing the possession of the freedom and peace of the silent Self, the mental being gets tempted to adopt the attitude of an indifferent and inactive witness of the world-play and at the best allow his organs of sense and motor-action a free play of their won unsup-

ported by any conscious initiation on the part of the witnessing self. The ideal of course is to reduce action to the barest minimum possible compatible with the maintenance of the bodily life.

Of course, there is another possibility, an alternative choice. Through a proper discipline one may come to a state where a perfect inner passivity may co-exist with perfect outer dynamism but altogether independent of each other. In this situation it is not the willed motive of the conscious mind in the Sadhaka that initiates and effectuates the activity,but rather the universal intelligence and will of nature that uses the living instrument and works flawlessly from centrs superconscious or subliminal to the conscious mind.

But this too is not what we seek to realise in our Yoga of dynamic divinisation. For in this particular status of inner passivity and outer action by the mere organs, *kevalair indriyair,* "there is an evident absence of integrality; for there is still a gulf, an unrealised unity or a left of consciousness between the passive and the active Brahman. We have still to possess consciously the active Brahman without losing the possession of the silent Self. We have to preserve the inner silence, tranquility, passivity as a foundation; but in place of an aloof indifference to the works of the active Brahman we have to arrive at an equal and impartial delight in them; in place of a refusal to participate lest our freedom and peace be lost, we have to arrive at a conscious possession of the active Brahman whose joy of existence does not abrogate His peace, nor His lordship of all workings impair His calm freedom in the midst of His works." But the crucial question is : is it at all possible for the mental being in his actually evolved status to embrace at once, equally and fully, both the world and the being, both consciousness and action?

The Intrinsic Incapacity: To answer the above question we must first note that between the normal consciousness of man the mental being and a truly spiritual supramental consciousness, there lies a thick veil, an almost impenetrable lid, *satyasyapihitam mukham,* and unless this veil is lifted and the lid removed, there is no possibility of knowing the divine, far be it to attain to it. But the difficulty is this that either through arduous Tapasya or by an act of Grace from above, when the mental being succeeds in putting by veil, it sees the Divine "as something above, beyond, around even in a sense, but with a gulf between that being and our being, *an unbridged or even an unbridgeable chasm.* There is this infinite existence; but it is quite other than the mental being who becomes aware of it....There is this great, boundless, unconditioned consciousness and force; but our consciousness a force *stands apart* from it, even if within it, limited, petty, discouraged, disgusted with itself and the world, but *unable to participate* in that higher thing which it has seen. There is this immeasurable and unstained bliss; but our own being remains the sport of a lower Nature of pleasure and pain and dull neutral sensation incapable of its divine delight. There is this perfect Knowledge and Will; but our own remains always the mental deformed knowledge and limping will incapable of sharing in or even being in tune with that nature of Godhead."

Now, in an attempt to bridge this chasm and heal the rift, the mental being seeks to rise through a Herculea all-forgetting effort out of itself into the Infinite above. But in this process "the mind has to *leave its own consciousness,* to disappear into another and temporarily or permanently lose *itself...* in the trance of Samdhi." For obvious reasons this mindless absolute trance-state cannot be our objective (vide Chap. V: The Critique of the Trance-Solution). Our aim is to transform the waking mentality itself, and for that we have to invoke another possibility open to the mental being.

As a matter of fact, mind has a great reflecting capability, reflecting whatever it knows and contemplates. Thus if it pacifies itself and calls down the divine into itself, it succeeds in reflecting the image of the divine and getting spiritualised. But

the trouble is that in this operation" the mind does not entirely possess the divine or become divine, but is possessed by it or by a luminous reflection of it so long at its remans in ... pure passivity." The moment it becomes active mind becomes turbid again and the relfection of the divine s lost.

Hence it is often declared that an absolute quietism and the cessation of all outer and inner action is the only way out of the above impasse. But evidently this fails to satisfy the demand soy the Integral Yoga. What we seek is "a positive transformation and not merely a negative quiescence of the waking mentality."

But the basic difficulty with the mind-consciousness is that it is an inveterate divider of the indivisible and dwells upon one aspect at a time to the exclusion of all others. For "mind in its essence is a consciousness which measures, limits, cuts out forms of things from the indivisible whole and contains them as if each were a separate integer...Mind may divide, multiply, add, subtract, but it cannot get beyond the limits of this mathematics. If it goes beyond and tries to conceive a real whole, it loses itself in a foreign element; it falls from its won firm ground into the ocean of the intangible, into the abysms of the infinite where it can either perceive, conceive, sense nor deal with its subject for creation and enjoyment....Mind cannot possess the infinite, it can only suffer it or be possessed by it; it can only lie blissfully helpless under the luminous shadow of the Real cast down on it from planes of existence beyond its reach."

It is because of this inherent propensity to divide and overstress that the Mind cannot hold at once Unity and Multiplicity, consciousness and action, being and becoming; it cannot possess simultaneously the active and the passive Brahman. And because of Mind's inability to possess the Infinite, if instead of being satisfied with the 'luminous shadow', golden lid, *hiranmayapatra*, one would seek to realise the utter Real, one

has perforce to get rid of mind altogether and enter into the absolute mindless *susupti*. It is for this reason that so many seekers of the past have recommended *manonasa* or the 'annulment of the Mind' as the *via royal* to the supreme spiritual experience.

thus we find Sri Ramakrishna declaring: "The knowledge of Brahman cannot be attained except through the annulment of Mind. A Guru told his disciple, 'Give me your mind and I shall give you knowledge.'"

The Rajarshi Janaka of old declared, "Now I have awakened and discovered the thief that is Mind; I must kill it, must scorch it to death. For Mind is the root of this world of ignorance."

According to the great sage Vasishtha, a great good comes out of the destruction of Mind, *manaso'bhyudayo manonaso mahodayah* and the Mind of the knower of the Truth verily gets annulled. *jnanino nasamabhyeti*. The Yoga Shikhopanishad too declares that mindlessness is the supreme status, *na manah kevalah parah*.

Thus, almost on universal testimony, the ideal before the seeker after the Truth is to get to the state of mindlessness, *amanasta* where the mind loses all its faculties, *yadā na manute manah and* becomes non-mind so to say, *unmanibhuyāt*.

What is then the solution for us who aspire after the freedom of divine action as well as the liberation of divine rest? If mind consciousness inclusive of its highest spiritual reaches proves its inadequacy as an instrument and medium for the divine possession of our waking existence, what other cosmic principle is there that can help us to realise our goal? For, for the proper fulfillment of our objective, "we have to review and remould the lower living in the light, force and joy of the higher reality. We have to realise Matter as a sense-created mould of Spirit, a vehicle for all manifestation of the light, force and joy of Sachchidananda in the highest conditions of terrestrial being and activity. We have to see Life as a channel for the infinite Force

divine and break the barrier of a sense-created and mind-crated farness and division from it so that divine Power may take possession of and direct and change all our life-activities until our vitality transfigured ceases in the end to be the limited life-force which now supports mind and body and becomes figure of the all-blissful conscious force of Sachchidananda. We have similarly to change our sensational and emotional mentality into a play of divine Love and universal Delight; and we have to surcharge the intellect which seeks to know and will inus with the light of the divine Knowledge-Will until it is transformed into a figure of that higher and sublime activity."

Such is then our high ideal, but how to realise it in practice, how to conquer the spiritual penury of our waking physical existence and embrace equally the active and passive aspects of the Divine? If Mind fails, what else is there that saves the situation.

APPENDIX

ASCENT FROM THE MIND-CONSCIOUSNESS*

" 'Consent to be nothing and none, dissolve Time's work,
Cast off thy mind, step back from form and name
Annual thyself that only God may be.

Thus spoke the mighty and uplifting voice,
And Savitri heard; she bowed her head and *mused*
Plunging her deep regard into herself
In her soul's privacy in the silent Night.
A loof and standing back detached and calm,
A *witness* of the drama of herself,
A student of her own interior scene,
She *watched* the passion and the toil of life
And heard in the crowded thoroughfares of mind
The unceasing tread and passage of her thoughts.
All she *allowed* to rise that chose to stir;
Calling, compelling nought, forbidding nought,
She left all to the process formed in Time
And the free initiative of Nature's will.

***

Above the birth of body and of thought
Our spirit's truth lives in the naked self
And from that height, unbound, surveys the world.
Out of the mind she rose to escape its law
That it might *sleep* in some deep shadow of self
Or fall *silent* in the silence of the Unseen.

***

Then all grew *tranquil* in her being's space,
Only sometimes small thoughts arose and fell
Life quiet waves upon a silent sea

* From Sri Aurobindo's Savitri, Book VII, canto VI, pp. 538-49 (Italicsours)

Or ripples passing over a lonely pool
When a stray stone disturb its *dreaming rest.*
Yet the mind's factory had ceased to work,
There was no sound of the dynamo's throb,
There came no call from the still fields of life.
There came no call from the still field of life,.
Then even those stirrings rose in her no more;
Her mind now seemed like a vast empty room
Or lie a peaceful landscape without sound.
This men call *quietude* and prize as peace.
But to her deeper sight *all yet was there,*
Effervescing like a chaos under a lid;
Feelings and thoughts cried out for word and act
But found no response in the *silenced brain:*
All was *suppressed* but *nothing yet expunged;*
At every moment might explosion come.
Then this too paused; the body seemed a stone.
All now was a wide mighty vacancy,
But *still excluded from elernity's hursh;*
For still was far the repose of the Absolute
And the ocean Silence of Infinity,
Even now some thoughts could cross her solitude:
these surged not from the depths or from within
Cast up trom formlessness to seek a form,
Spoke not the body's need nor voiced mind's call.
These seemed not born nor made in human Time,

***

Out of some far expanse they seems dot come
As if carried on vast wings like large white sails,
And with easy access reached the inner ear.

***

As yet their path lay deep concealed in light
then looking to know whence the intruders came

She saw a spiritual immensity
Pervading and ecnompassing the world-space
As either our transparent tangible air,
And through it sailing tranquilly a thought.

As smoothly glides a shinearing aport,
It came to *the silent city of the brain*
Towards it accustomed and expectant quay,
But met a barring will, a blow of Force
And *sank vanishing* in the immensity
After along vacant pause another appeared
And others one by one suddenly emerged,
Mind's unexpected vistors from the unseen
Life far-off sials upon a lonely sea.
But soon that commerce failed, none reached mind's coast
Then all grew still, nothing moved any more:
Immobile, self-rapt, timeless, solitary
A silent spirit pervaded silent Space.

***

In that *absolute stillness* bare and formidable
There was glimpsed an all-negating Void supreme
that claimed its mystic Nihil's sovereign right
To cancel Nature and deny the soul.
Even the nude sense of self grew pale and thin:
Impersonal, signless, featureless, void of forms,
A black pure consciousness had replaced the mind.

***

Yet still her body saw and moved and spoke;
It understood without the aid of thought,
It said whatever needed to be said,

It did whatever needed to be done
There was no person there behind the act,

No mind that chose or passed the fitting word:
All wrought like an unerring apt machine.
As if continuing old habitual turns,
And pushed by an old unexhausted force
the engine did the work for which it was made:
Her consciousness looked on and took no part;

***

This seeing was identical with the seen:
It knew without knowledge all that could be known,
It saw impartially the world go by,
But in the same supreme unmoving glance
Saw too its *abysmal unreality.*
It watched the figure of the cosmic game,
But the thought and inner life in forms seemed dead
Abolished by her own collapse of thought;
A hollow physical shell persisted still.

***

Once sepulchred alive in brain and flesh
She had risen up from body,mind and life;
she was no more a Person in a world,
She had *escaped into infinity.*

***

Only some *last annulment* now remained,
Annihilation's vague indefinable step"

Chapter-6

The Inwardization and the Ascension

Chapter-6

His knowledge an inview caught unfathomable,
An outview by no brief horizons cut:
He thought and felt in all, his gaze had power.

(Sir Aurobindo, *Savitri,* Book II, Canto XV, p. 301)

The thing to begained is the bringing in of a Power of Consciousness (the Supramental) not yet organised or active directly in earth-nature, even in the spiritual life, but yet to be organised and made directly active

(Sir Aurobindo, *On Himself* p. 109)

The overhead ascension is not indispensable for the usual spiritual purposes,— but itis indispensable for the purposes of this Yoga. For its aim is to become aware of and liberate and transform and unite all the being in the light of a Truth-Consciousness which is above and cannot be reached if there is no entirely inward-going and no transcending and upward-going movement.

*(Ibid., pp. 179-80_*

The Intergral Yoga of Transformation has for its objective not merely the supreme realisation of Sachchidananda, but HIs divine self-expression, the flawless manifestation of the active Brahman, in our divinely tansfigured embodied earthly existence.

But the question is: how to realise this goal of our Yoga and what it is that my possibly bethe medium of these realising ascensions and world-possessing descents? For, in the actually elaborated evolutionary status of human consciousness, mind represents the highest cosmic principle and power of consciousness so far organised in amn the mental being. But this mindconsciousness, evn in its highest flights, is no more than a

movement in the Ignorance: it is not inherently Truth-Conscious. And hence it is altogether incapable of possessing or even attaining to the Divine; at best it can immobilise itself and rest satisfied with Reflections of the sun in waters still'

But it is far from our goal to be contented with "bright or shadowy photographs or films of a distant Reality" that the mind can at most achieve for us: we want to ascend to the supreme. Reality in full awareness and bring down its dynamic glories and splendours in the play of our waking state.

But we cannot but take note of the fact of spiritual experience certified by most seekers of the Truth that an immense hiatus seems to exist between the supramental Truth-Consciousness and the Mind-Consciousness we normally know of. And unless this seemingly unbridgeable gulf intervening between the two is satisfactorily bridged, we have to forego our dream.

> ... to plant on earth the living Truth
> Or make of Matter's world the home of God.

In that case, we shall have no other choice than to take a super-conscient leap from the station of Mind into the Unknowable beyond and to agree willy-nilly to the following trenchant conclusion of the incredulous Darkness persuading Savitri to abandon her task of world-transformation:

> He who would turn to God must leave the world;
>
> He who would live in the Spirit, must give up life;
> He who has met the Self, renounces self.
> The voyagers of the million routes of mind
> Who have travelled through Existence to is end,
> Sages exploring the world-ocean's vasts,
> Have found extinction the sole harbour safe."

Indeed, mind fails as an instrument and medium both for our conscious ascension into the Infinite as well as for the dynamic descent and manifestation of the supreme powersof the Spirit. As has been so well said, mind cannot arrive at identity with the

Absolute, it can only disappear into it in a swoon or extinction, into St. John of the Cross's 'divine Darkness of the mystic Night.' Also, as a medium of divine expression and action, the mind plane cannot in its very nature allow of the supreme workings native to the divine Consciousness-Force. "The mind spiritualised, purified, liberated, perfected within its own limits may come as near as possible to a faithful mental translation, but... this is after all a relative fidelity and an imperfect perfection...The mind...can take its [the Infinite's] suggestions and act them out *in its own way*, a way always fragmentary, derivative and subject to a greater or less deformation, but it cannot be *itself* the direct and perfect instrument of the infinite Spirit acting in its own knowledge."

It becomes imperative then for the fulfillment of our divine destiny upon earth that man should be able to raise himself much above the plane of mind and normally and permanently, even in his waking state, live in the supernal heights of the Spirit, also to manifest and organise in his embodied existence new plances and powers of consciousness other than and superior to mind, so that these may offer themselves as the proper media and instrumentation through which the divine Will and Wisdom can freely act and self-express.

But between the Mind and the Spirit, are there other superior places of spiritual consciousness-not merely static and introspective, but creative and dynamic- which man can possibly hope to ascend? And is it at all possible for man to develop and organise these supernal planes in his waking consciousness so much so that he may outgrow and transcend his present mental status and become something more than human?

The anwer and hope lie in the process of evolutionary elaboration of manifested existence here upon the face of the earth. The results so far achieved by Evolution are indeed truly striking: it is surely along march from the insentient Matter to the self-conscious mind of man. But who can say that the evolution-

ary nisus has exhausted itself with the emergence of man the mental being, so that the only possible course left for the embodied soul is how to make an exit from this not too perfect world-existence and take the transcendent leap into the Unknowable and Unmanifest?

As a matter of fact, the evolutionary oestrus is even now very much at work and it is not liable to annul itself until and unless the divine Sachchidananda is fully manifested here in our embodied existence and 'this earthly life become the life divine.' For such is the original intended meaning of creation, this is the secret spiritual sense of the evolutionary march. Thus Savitri answered to refute the conjecture of the sophist Power of doubt and denial:

How says thou Truth can never light the human mind
And bliss can never invade the mortal's heart
Or God descend into the world he made?
If in the meaningless Void the creation rose,
If from a bodiless Force Matter was bron,
If Life could climb in the unconscious tree,
If green delight break into emerald leaves
And its laughter of beauty blossom in the flower,
If sense could wake in tissue,nerve and cell,
And Thought seize the greg matter of the brain,
And soul peep from its secrecy through the flesh,
How shall the nameless light not leap on men,
And unknown powers emerge from Nature's Sleep?
Even now hints of a luminous Truth like stats
Arise in the mind-mooned spled nour of Ignorance;
Even now the deathless Lover's touch we feel:
If the chamber's door is even a little ajar,
What then can hinder God from stealing in
Or who forbid his kiss on the sleeping soul?"

But the skeptic may still rejoin that the past is no sure guide to the future and plausibility is never equivalent to certainty. So,

after establishing the plausibility of our goal of divine transformation of the waking existence, we must now specially point out the steps following which this goal can be realised in practice. And for this we must rely, surely not on philosophical speculation or logical surmisings, but solely on the verdict of the ever-ascending and ever-deepening spiritual exploration of our being and becoming. For, this alone has any real validity in this field.

Now, there are two types of movements of our consciousness through which it becomes possible for us to have access to the deeper and superior reaches of our being: *a movement inward* and *an upward ascension.*

By the first movement of inward penetration, we seek to break asunder the wall separating our subliminal self from our present surface existence, leave the surface consciousness and live entirely in the realm of our inner mind, inner life, inner subtle-physical and finally in the in most soul of our being. This in most soul or the psychic being is the Purusha in the secret heart, *hrdye guhāyām,* a porton of the Divine Self supporting the individual nature.

Now, an enlargement and completion of our *actual* evolutionary status becomes the very first consequence of such an inwardization of consciousness. For, our inner being is found to possess a dynamism and potentialities much superior to those of our surface mind and life and body. As a matter of fact, "it is capable of a *direct communication* with the universal forces, movements, objects of the cosmos, *a direct feeling and opening* to them, *a direct action* on them and even a *widening* of itself beyond the limits of the personal mind, the personal life, the body, so that it feels itself more and more a universal being no longer limited by the existing walls of our too narrow mental, vital, physical existence. This widening can extend itself to a complete entry into the consciousness of cosmic Mind, into unity with the universal Life, even into a oneness with universal Matter."

But this first result is not all that can be desired. For, however cosmic in scope and perfected in dynamism, our being remains still embedded in the field of diminished cosmic truth, if not in total cosmic Ignorance. If we would transcend the limitations of our *present* evolutionary status, we must seek to become *conscious* in what is now superconsceint to us and *ascend* to the native heights of the Spirit not at present accessible to our waking consciousness. Thus, "the psychic movement inward to the inner being,...must be completed by an opening upward to a supreme spiritual status,"

Now, this is the second-and from our point of view,much more momentous-consequence of an accomplished inward living. For, it is found that once the entry into the inner subliminal realms is successfully undertaken, the inner being exerts a growing pressure on the "strong hard and bight lid of mind,-mind constricting, dividing and separative" that clouds the superconscient from our waking consciousness. This pressure be comes in the end so great that the lid of mind wears thin, opens and disappear, and our consciousness becomes privileged to have a vision of the supernal things. What we see by this is upward opening is "an infinity above us, an eternal Presence or an infinite Existence, an infinity of consciousness, an infinity of bliss,-a boundless Self, a boundless Light, a boundless Power, a boundless Ecstasy."

But even this 'wide awareness from below' is not sufficient. We must make an actual ascension to the height of the spirit above. Fortunately, this too is an alternative or subsequent result of the inward living. Our consciousness rises up towards the reaches of our being, much beyond the present mental level.

But here a very serious difficulty supervenes and unless this is successfully remedied in time, one may be very well led away from the path of divine transformation of Nature into the silent immobility of the Transcendent and Unmanifest.

Indeed, since the heights to which our consciousness attains in its upward ascension are in general superconscient to

our mind, the latter fails to remain awake there and hence considers these ascents as only luminously blank. Thus, our mind-consciousness is tempted to effectuate a short-cut and take a straight jump to the Transcendent. On this line, "the first most ordinary result is a discovery of a vast static and silent Self which we feel to be our real or our basic existence...There may be even an extinction, a Nirvana both of our active being and of the sense of self into a Reality that is indefinable and inexpressible...It is possible to remain in a Nirvana of all individuality, to stop at a static realisation or, regarding all the cosmic movement as a superficial play or illusion imposed on the silent Self, to pass into some supreme immobile and immutable status beyond the universe."

But fortunately this is not the only possible line of supernormal spiritual experience: the withdrawal from all participation in the world-existence and the immergence or extinction into the Unmanifest is not the only spiritual destiny decreed for the human soul. A supreme divine return from the verge of Nirvana into the world-play is equally possible and this with the undiminished splendors and potencies of all the spiritual wealth amassed at the summits. The choice is indeed hard and difficult. For, the ultimate and definitive withdrawal into the Infinite and Eternity is too alluring a prospect to be easily rejected by the ascending soul. To have instead 'the supernal birth' one must have

> ..trod along extinction's narrow edge
> Near the high verges of eternity.

This double alternative and the difficult of choosing between the two have been beautifully depicted in the following passage of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitiri:*

> She had risen up from body, mind and life;
> She was no more a Person in a world,
> She had escaped into infinity.
> ....
> *Only some last annulment now remained,*

Annihilation's vague indefinable step:
A memory of being still was there
And kept her separate from nothingness:
She was in That but still became not That.
This shadow of herself so close to nought
Could be again self's point d'appui to live,
Return out of the Inconceivable
And be what some mysterious vast might choose.
Even as the Unknowable decreed,
She might be nought or new-become the All,
Or if the omnipotent Nihil took a shape
Emerge as someone and redeem the world.
Even, she might learn what the mystic cipher held,
This seeming exit or closed end of all
Could be a blind tenebrous passage screened from sight,
Her state the eclipsing shell of darkened sun
On its secret way to the Ineffable.
Even now her splendid being might flame back
Out of the silence and the nullity,
A gleaming portion of the all-Wonderful,
A power of some all-affirming Absolute,
A shining mirror of the eternal Truth
To show to the One-in-all its manifest face,
To the souls of men their deep identity.
Or she might wake into God's quietude
Beyond the cosmic day and cosmic night
And rest appeased in his white eternity.

But once we set aside the exit-solution as not conforming to our goal and try instead to become aware in those supernal realms where we could not remain awake before, we find that our consciousness rises to those ascending heights of the Spirit where its immobile status is but the necessary foundation for a greatly potent and luminous dynamism. Once the power to remain awake develops in us, once we rise out of the sphere of mortal mind and look deep and high and far, we discover the splendors of a

graded series of planes and powers of consciousness-an intervening spiritual mind-range-serving as links and bridges between the now normal waking mind and 'the native heights of supramental and pure spiritual being.'

It is in these 'radiant altitudes' of the Spirit that "we find the secret we are seeking, the means of the transition, the needed step towards a supramental transformation ; for we perceive a graduality of ascent, a communication with a more and more deep and immense light and power from above, a scale of intensities which can be regarded as so many stair in the ascension of Mind or in a descent into Mind from That which is beyond it."

In this incessant ascending gradation through which our consciousness rises towards the supramental Truth-Consciousness, four principle ascents may be distinguished. These gradations may be broadly described as 'a series of sublimations of the consciousness' through what Sri Aurobindo has termed Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition and Overmind; "there is a succession of self-transmutations at the summit of which lies the Supermind or Divine-Gnosis....All these degrees are gnostic in their principle and power; for even at the first we begin to pass from a consciousness based on an original In conscience and acting in a general Ignorance or in a mixed Knowledge-Ignorance to a consciousness based on a secret self-existent Knowledge and..In themselves these grades are grades of energy-substance of the Spirit...they are domains of being, grades of the substance and energy of the spiritual being, fields of existence which are each a level of the universal Consciousness. Force constituting and organising itself into a higher status..Each stage of this ascent is a general, if not a total conversion of the being into a new light and power of a greater existence."

For the characterisation of this fourfold ascent and the dynamic-spiritual implications thereof,the reader is referred to *Chapter XXVI, Book Two ("The Ascent towards Supermind")* of Sri

Aurobindo's *The Life Divine.* For the continuity of our discussion we content ourselves with only some broad hints about the nature of these four higher grades of our being.

The first ascent out of our normal mentality is into a *Higher Mind* of automatic and spontaneous Knowledge, where knowledge assumes the nature of Truth-Thought. Its most characteristic movement is "a mass ideation, a system or totality of truth-seeing at a single view;...this thought is a self-revelation of eternal Wisdom, not an acquired Knowledge."

Beyond the Higher Mind of Truth-Thought is the *Illumined Mind* of Truth-Sight, a Mind where

there are vasts of vision and eternal suns,
Oceans of an immortal luminousness,
Flame-hills assaulting heaven with their peaks,
There dwelling all becomes a blaze of sight;
A burning head of vision leads the mind,
Thought trails behind it its long comet tail;
The heart glows, an illuminate and seer,
And sense is kindled into identity.

Thus the characteristic power of the illumined Mind is not Thought but Vision; it is the field of "the outpourings of massive lightning of flaming sun-stuff." And on the dynamic side there is here "a golden drive, a luminous 'enthousiasms' of inner force and power,...almost a violent impetus of rapid transformation."

Next in the order of ascension in the *Intuitive Mind* whose characteristic power is an intimate and exact Truth-perception which is much more than sight and conception. Intuition is in us "a projecting blade, edge or point of a far-off supermind light entering into and modified by some intermediate truth-mind substance above us...Intuition has a fourfold power. A power of revelatory truth-seeing, a power of inspiration or truth-hearing, a power of truth-touch or immediate seizing of significance,... a power of true and automatic discrimination of the orderly and

exact relation of truth to truth." Thus

Intuition's lightning range in a bright pack
Hunting all hidden truths out of their lairs,
Its fiery edge of seeing absolute
Cleaves into locked unknown retreats of self,
Rummages the sky-recesses of the brain,
Lights up the occult chambers of the heart;
Its spear-point ictus of discovery
Pressed on the cover of name, the screen of form,
Strips bare the secret soul of all that is
Thought there has revelation's sun-bright eyes;
The Word, a mighty and inspiriting Voice,
Enters Truth's inmost cabin of privacy
And tears away the veil from God and life.

Beyond the plane of the Intuitive Mind is a superconscient cosmic Mind, a principle of global knowledge which carries in it 'a delegated light from the supramental gnosis,' The Overmind is in direct contact with the Supramental Truth-Consciousness and represents the 'highest possible status-dynamis' of the Spirit in the spiritual-mind range. 'The cosmic empire of the Overmind' represents 'the boundless finite's last expanse' and

Time's buffer state bordering Eternity,
Too vast for the experience of man's soul:
All here gathers beneath one golden sky:
The Powers that build the cosmos station take
In its house of infinite possibility;
Each god from there builds his own nature's world;
Ideas are phalanxed like a group of sums;
Thought crowds in masses seized by one regard;
All Time is one body, Space a single book:
There is the Godhead's universal gaze,
And there the boundaries of immortal Mind:

The Overmind may be considered to be the delegate of Supermind to the lower hemisphere of Knowledge-Ignorance; it

links the latter with that supramental Gnosis or Truth-Consciousness, "...while yet at the same time with its brilliant golden Lid it veils the face of the greater Truth from our sight..This then is the occult link we were looking for; This the Power that at once connects and divides the supreme Knowledge and the cosmic Ignorance."

With the Overmind we thus reach the line that parts and joins the lower and the upper hemispheres of existence. Here two possibilities open up before the soul. Either it may seek to reach the supreme supracosmic Sachchidananda direct from the spiritualised mind-range and in that process depart out of its cosmic formation into the eternally static oneness of Sachchidananda or rather pure Sat (Existence), absolute and eternal or else a pure Non-existence, absolute and eternal."

But evidently this is not our line. Since we seek to possess divinely our world-being as well a sour self-being, we must cross the borderline, pass into the upper hemisphere transcending even the highest reach of spiritual mind and seek to realise Sachchidananda on the plane of Supermind. For, supermind is Sachchidananda's "..power of self-awareness and world-awareness, the world being known as within itself and not outside..[It is] the Truth-Consciousness whether above or in the universe by which the Divine knows not only his own essence and bring but his *manifestation also.* Its fundamental character is knowledge by identity, by that the Self is known, the Divine Sachchidananda is known, but also the truth of manifestation is known, because this too is That."

Hence it becomes imperative for the soul to pass through the supramental ralisation if, instead of departing into the Transcendence, it would simultaneously live in the transcendnce of the supreme Sachchidananda and possess its world-view too.

But even these supreme ascents accomplished n full spiritual awareness do not prove sufficient for our purpose. These cannot cure our waking consciousness of its apparently irremediably spiritual penury. For that supreme movement of descent should follow the supreme movement of ascension and Heaven should consent to come down CHAPTER Xupon Earth. But is that at all possible?

THE DESCENT OF THE SUPERMIND

I know that I can lift man's soul to God,
I know that he can bring the immortal down

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri,* Book XI, Canto I, p. 687)

The integral perfection can come only by a mounting ascent of the lowest into the highest and an incessant descent of the highest into the lowest till all becomes one at once solid block and plastic sea-stuff of the Truth infinite and eternal

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, p. 478)

There are different statuses of the divine consciousness. There are also different statuses of transformation. First is the psychic transformation, in which all is in contact with the Divine through the individual psychic consciousness. Next is the spiritual transformationinwhich all is merged Divine in the cosmic consciousness. Third is the supramental transformation in which all becomes supramentalised in the divine gnostic consciousness. It is only with the latter that there can begin the complete transformation of mind, life and body-in my sense of completeness.

(Sri Aurobindo, *On Himself*, p. 118)

In our attempt to chalk out the steps following which an embodied being here upon earth may hope to transfigure his waking existence so much so that a divinely dynamic life can flower out in the earthly garden, we have come to the finding that an essential preliminary condition is for our soul to consciously ascend to the supernal grades of being and power of the self-manifesting spirit, that intervene between our normal mind and the Truth-Consciousness of Supermind.

Of course, it is true that without actually ascending to these higher spiritual mental planes and permanently living there, if we can open ourselves from below to their knowledge and spiritual influences, we can somewhat spiritualise our normal waking being and consciousness. But the spiritual change effected in this way is never profound or wide in its scope. It touches only the fringe of our dynamic existence. In order to have an entire consciousness and power of Being, it is altogether indispensable that we gather up our consciousness and rise out of the sphere of ignorant mind into the radiant higher altitudes of the Spirit.

And these ascents must be made in full awareness and not merely in the immobile trance-state of absorbed super conscience. For in the latter case, on the return to the waking consciousness from these temporary sojourns, only an indeterminate spiritual impression may abide but not much of dynamic effect. In order to have the dynamis of the higher spiritual grades of being active and organised in our waking life, we must first effectuate "a *conscious* heightening and widening into immense ranges of new being, new consciousness, new potentialities of action."

But this ascension of our consciousness to these higher luminous planes, even if permanently centred there, does not suffice for the spiritual transformation of our being and nature. the permanent ascent *from* the lower to the higher consciousness must be followed by the complementary process of a permanent descent of the higher *into* the lower. The transmutation of our present modes of being and activities into spiritual values leading to the transfiguration of our waking existence necessitates then not merely an ascension to the planes above nor even the exertion from there of an indirect pressure and influence upon our lower being but the brining down of the Power and Light of the supernal reaches in the very field of our normal being, consciousness and action. For "there is a dynamism proper to the spiritual consciousness whose nature is Light, Power, Ananda,

Peace, Knowledge, infinite Wideness, and that *must be possessed and descend* into the whole being. *Otherwise one can get mukti but not perfection or transformation* (except a relative psycho-spiritual change)."

The descent of the spiritual potencies and forces of the higher places (from the Higher Mind to the Overmind) is thus the third necessary motion following the other two of ascension and permanent stationing above. In this process of percolation, downpour or influx, occur "an increasing inflow from above, an experience of reception and retention of the descending spirit or its powers and elements of consciousness." When this phase is more or less completed, we say that the being and nature has undergone *spiritual transformation,* a transformation that links the manifested existence with what lies beyond and above it.

But even this is not enough for our goal. For, the process of spiritualisation brings about mostly a subjective transformation, the instrumental Nature remaining as before full of many disabilities and deficiencies. Even the Overmind, the summit-reach of our spiritual mind-range, fails to effectuate a complete change of Nature, for this too is "subject to limitations in the working of the effective Knowledge, limitations in the working of the Power subject to a partial and limited Truth."

For the full and radical transformation what is indispensable is the direct intervention and the unveiled action of the supramental Gnosis in our earth-existence and earth-nature. But that can come about only when a prior ascent to the plane of Supermind is followed by the supramental descent in the field of terrestrial manifestation.

But what precisely are the difficulties offered by our present being and nature, that cannot be satisfactorily met even by the highest spiritual-mental powers? What are the lacunae involved in the process of spiritual transformation? The essential difficulty comes from the fact that we are evolutionary creatures. Our evolution has started from the apparently blank bosom of In

con science and this dark heritage of original Nescience is still weighting very heavily upon our nature. Our normal being is almost wholly moulded out of the Inconsceince and "it is this substance of nescience that has to be transformed into a substace of superconscience, a substance in which consciousness and a spiritual awareness are always there even when they are not active, not expressed...Till that is done, the nescience invades or encompasses or even ceils up and absorbs into its oblivious darkness all that enters into it; it compels the descending light to compromise with the lesser light it enters: there is a mixture, a diminution and dilution of itself, a diminution, a modification, an incomplete authenticity of its truth and power."

It is because of this blind opposing Necessity, this dark attachment to the already established an seemingly inexorable Laws of the Ignorance that the higher spiritual lights and powers, even those of the Overmind, coming down into the obscurity of our physical conseiousness lose much of their transforming potency and become instead mutilated, circumscribed and not altogether dynamically effective.

Thus a perfect transfiguration of our lower nature is a far cry if we would rely on the spiritual-mental powers alone. We may feel indeed our inner consciousness luminous and liberated and ecstatic, but our outer being and nature will still go on in their old unregenerate way, bringing in periods of dull obscurations and unwanted reactions due to the play of the *gunas*. "The power of divinely illumined mind may be immense compared with ordinary powers, but it will still be subject to incapacity and there can be no perfect correspondence between the force of the effective will and the light of the idea which inspires it. *The infinite Presence may be there in status, but dynamis of the operations of nature still belongs to the lower Prakriti,* must follow its triple modes of working and cannot give any adequate form to the greatness within it. This is the tragedy of in effectivity, of the hiatus between ideal and effective will...."

This is the reason why it has been always found that a subjective spirituality concentrated on the change of the inner being alone, leaving the outer nature to go its old way, is much easier to accomplish than to objectivies this spirituality in the dynamic life of a free world-action. In the course of our Spiritual Sadhana, our totality of existence very soon and very easily dissociates into two fields, an inner one and an outer one. The inner being and nature has always a much less fettered gait: it awakens easily enough, receives freely the higher spiritual influences and gets more or less transformed. But the external surface self and nature are mostly moulded by the forces of the established Ignorance and the original Nescience. And hence they are tardy in awakening, sluggish in receiving and impervious to uninhibited assimilation. It is, for this reason, "always easier to spiritualise the inner self-sufficient parts than to transform the outer action; a perfection of introspective, indwelling...spirituality aloof from the world or self protected against it is easier than a perfection of the whole nature in a dynamic, kinetic spirituality objectivised in the life, embracing the world, master of its environment, sovereign in its commerce with world-nature."

But whether easy of fulfillment or not, this is what we have placed before us as *our* goal: an integral transformation of our outer being and nature as well as that of the inner one, entailing the divinisation of our waking physical existence and of the dynamic life of action. And as we have mentioned before, it is only the overt intervention of the divine supermind in our earth-nature that can negative the dark Necessity of downward pull of our present evolutionary existence and usher in the establishment of the Life Divine.

And for that an ascent out of the lower hemisphere topped by the Overmind onto the plane of supramental Gnosis becomes the first necessity. For, the dynamic as well as the static realisation of Sachchidananda cannot be *inseparably* and *simultaneously* had except through the Supermind, the Truth-Consciousness of the divine Reality. "The universe is dynamism, move-

ment-the essential experience of Sachchidananda apart from the dynamism and movement is static. The full dynamic truth of Sachchidananda and the universe and its consequence cannot be grasped by any other consciousness than the supermind, because the instrumentation in all other [lower] planes is inferior and there is therefore a disparity between the fullness of the static experience and the incompleteness of the dynamic power, knowledge, result of the inferior light and power of other planes. this is the reason why the consciousness of the other spiritual planes, even if it descends, can make no radical change in the earth-consciousness, it can only modify or enrich it."

So we see that this sublime ascent from below, from out of the spiritual mind's sphere, into the supramental plane of being and consciousness, is the first radical step on the way to the fulfillment we have been seeking in our Yoga. But his ascension is not enough: it has to be completed by a supreme descent from above, the descent of the Supermind in earth-nature. For, it is only in the divine Truth-Consciousness or Supermind that the power of dynamic transformation can be *integral* and *absolute*.

As a matter of fact, only the supermind can thus *descend without losing* its full power of action; for its action is always in *trinsic* and *automatic*, its will and knowledge identical and the result commensurate: its nature is a self-achieving Truth-consciousness... Only the supramental Force can *entirely* overcome [the] difficult of the fundamental Nescience; for with it enters an opposite and luminous imperative Necessity which underlies all things and is the original and final self-determining truth-force of the self-existent Infinite. This greater luminous spiritual necessity and its sovereign imperative *alone* can displace or entirely penetrate, transform into itself and so replace the blind Ananke of the Inconscience."

So, this is the second capital movement: the descent of the Supermind in earth-existence and earth-nature. But something

much more has to be achieved before our goal of divine and dynamic life upon earth becomes a realised fact of existence. *The involved Supermind as to emerge to meet the descending Supermind.*

As a matter of fact, even now, the supramental principle is here secretly lodged in all existence, even behind the grossest materiality. It is the Supermind that is sustaining and governing this manifested lower worlds by its self-concealed power and law. But at present the Supermind is involved and hidden behind this lower triplicity of mind, life and matter: it cannot act overtly or in its won intrinsic power, because of the absence of proper instrumentation in the earth-nature. Its "power veils itself and [its] law works unseen through the shackled limitations and limping deformations of the lesser rule of our physical, vital, mental Nature."

Now if the supramental change of the whole substance of our being and of all its modes and movements has at all to be made perfect and integral, this involved Supermind in Nature must be liberated upon earth, join with the descending Supermind, prepare the ground for the divine dynamic play of Supernature (*para prakrti)* and act as "an overtly operative power in the terrestrial workings..., - in the same way in which thinking Mind has been established through the human evolution as an overtly operative power in Life and Matter. This would mean the appearance in the evolution of a gnostic being or Purusha and a gnostic Prakriti, a gnostic-Nature. There must be an emergent supramental Consciousness-Force liberated and active within the terrestrial whole and an organised supramental instrumentation of the Spirit in the life and the body..."

It is in this way that the spiritual penury of our waking existence can be radically remedied and one can enjoy a divine life here upon earth itself, even in the physical embodied existence, without any "need to shun existence or plunge into the annihilation of the spiritual Person in some self-extinguishing Nirvana."

Chapter-7

The Conquest

Chapter-7

The Spirit's tops and nature's base shall draw
Near to the secret of their separate truth
And know each other as one deity.
the Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face
Then man and superman shall be at one
And all the earth become a single life.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book XI, Canto I, p. 709z)

A manifestation of the Supermind and its truth-consciousness is...inevitable; it must happen in this world sooner or later. But it has two aspects, a descent from above, an ascent from below, a self-revelation of the Spirit, an evolution in Nature

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation*, p. 80)

As the psychic change has to call in the spiritual to complete it, so the first spiritual change has to call in the supramental transformation to complete it...This then must be the nature of the third and final transformation which finishes the passage of the soul through the Ignorance and bases its consciousness, its life, its power and form of manifestation on a complete and completely effective self-knowledge..So must be created the supramental and spiritual being as the first unveiled manifestation of the truth of the Self and Spirit in the material universe.

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, pp. 917-18)

We have almost come to the end of our long dissertation on how to remedy the spiritual penury of our waking physical existence. Not an escape or at the least a quientistic withdrawal from the world-consciousness, but rather the integral and victorious embracing of the life of action and creation a and the divine transfiguration of the whole of our existence, is what we have

place before us as our goal.

But a further point remains to be elucidate here. A well established line of spiritual experience shows that whenever our soul gets involved in action,it loses hold and becomes nescient of its immobile, passive and so-called true status, whereas a withdrawal from dynamism and an involution into passivity makes it totally oblivious of it is active status which thus appears to be just a false superimposition upon the freedom and bliss of the soul. Now, if this experience is the only or the ultimate experience possible, then we have perforce to admit that an active life cannot be compatible with the conscious experience and enjoyment of the soul-status. But fortunately this is not so. This alternation in the nescience of the active and the passive statuses occurs because it is only apart of our being na dot the totality of it that shifts it centre and makes the alternative movements. But in reality there are not two distinct and separate statuses: there is instead only a unique dual status, a status embraces at the same time both the aspects, the static one and the dynamic one.

We have already spoken of the active Brahman and the passive Brahman, but there are not two independent realities, one immobile, the other mobile. "The Reality is neither an eternal passivity of immobile Being nor an eternal activity of Being in movement, nor is it an alternation in Time between these two things. Neither in fact is the sole absolute truth of Brahman's reality...There is not a passive Brahman and an active Bahman, but one Brahman, an Existence which reserves Its Tapes in what we call passivity and gives itself in what we call its activity. Fort he purposes of action, there are *two poles of one being or a double power* necessary for creation...Brahman does not pass alternately from passivity to activity and back to passivity by cessation of its dynamic force of being....Integral Brahman possess both the passivity and the activity *simultaneously* and does not pass alternately fromone to the other as from a sleep to a waking."

The analogy of sleep and waking is a very apt one here. For, what we normally find is that in our waking state we forget about our sleep status and while in the sleep-state we become oblivious of our waking existence. But this is so only because a small part of our being makes the transition and oscillates between the two states of awareness. And since this part cannot embrace the totality of our existence, it becomes nescient of one or the other of the two statuses, depending on its particular station at the time. But through a proper self-discipline on can so widen the scope of one's conscious discernment that one has no more to make this abrupt and all-forgetting change-over, but can instead hold both the states in a single uninterrupted gaze.

It is the same thing with the experience of Brahman. Action and creation need not and should not externalise the consciousness and make one lose the silent freedom of the passive Brahman nor should the experience of the immobile Brahman be incompatible with the free possession of its mobile status. The apparent incapability arises from the fact that ordinarily we identify ourselves with only apart of the totality of our consciousness- the mental or at its highest the spiritual-mental part of it - and seek to realise the Divine through this limited part alone.

And since this just apart and not the integral consciousness, it cannot simultaneously embrace both the aspects. Thus dynamis obliterates the self of status from its awareness and passivity loosens its hold on the self of action. When this passivity becomes entire, our mind-consciousness falls asleep, so to say, enters into the trance-state of Samadhi or else is liberated into a spiritual silence. But evidently this is not the line which we would like to follow. For "though it is a liberation from the ignorance of the partial being in its flux of action, it is earned by putting on a luminous nescience of the dynamic Reality oraluminous separation from it: the spiritual mental being remains self-absorbed in a silent essential status of existence an becomes is the incapable of active consciousness or repugnant to all activity."

But our goal is the integral fulfillment of our integral existence, the integral and simultaneous possession of both the static and dynamic aspects of the Divine, as is the case with Sachchidananda Himself. But this is possible only if we possess the integral consciousness. And this integral consciousness comes only with the attainment of the supramental Gnosis. For, as we have mentioned before, this Gnosis is twofold Truth-Consciousness, an inherent and integral self-knowledge and at the same time an intimate and integral consciousness of the manifestation. As a matter of fact, Sufermind is none other than Sachchidananda's power of self awareness and world-awareness, and thus the dynamically integral liberation and fulfillment that we are seeking after can be achieved only in and through this supramental *Vijnanna*.

We have seen how to retain the consciousness of the passive Brahman while at the same time participation gin the consciousness of the active aspect of it. But that does not automatically signify that our nature-part as distinct from our inner soul-existence will also get transformed and be moulded in the image of the Divine. But this is what we precisely need for the fulfillment of our goal. For it isn't merely the liberation of our soul, but the liberation and the divine transfiguration of the whole of our Nature, *prakrti-mukti, prakrit-rupantara,* enabling the establishment of a Life Divine upon earth, that is the total content of our aim. Let us now proceed to show how this Prakriti Mukti and Prakriti-Rupantara can be integrally achieved through the Supermind.

But what is meant by soul or by Nature, by Purusha and his Prakriti? Any relatively profound psycho-spiritual inquiry makes us aware of two elements of our being, a soul and a Nature. Purusha or soul, individual or universal, is the observing and experiencing conscious existence seemingly inactive but in relation with its becoming, while Prakriti or Nature, again individual or universal, s the principle and the powers f the becoming, appearing as an executive Force or an energy of Process which is

seen to constitute, drive and guide all conceivable activities and to create a myriad forms visible to us and invisible and use them as stable supports for to incessant flux of action and creation."

Apparently, Purusha and Prakriti seem to be two different and distinct Principles. Not only that: in the ordinary status of conscious existence, the action and influence of Prakriti seem to be deleterious to the progress of the soul. As a matter of fact, as Sri Aurobindo has so beautifully put it, the whole problem of life resolves itself into this one question:

"What are we to do with this soul and nature set face to face with each other, this Nature, this personal and cosmic activity, which tries to impress itself upon the soul, to possess, control, determine it, and this oul which feels that in some mysterious way it has freedom, a control over itself, a responsibility for what it is and does, and tries therefore to turn upon Nature, its own and the world's and to control, possess, enjoy, or even, it may be, reject and escape from her?

It is because of this apparent tendency of the Purusha to et involved and self-lost in the obscuring action of Prakriti that the self-recovering soul feels a sort of aloof detachment if not total repugnance for the play of Nature and seeks to stand back from it and destroy all earthward tendencies so that it may securely possess its static infinity.

But this antagonism between Soul and Nature is more apparent than real. for in reality, they are not distinct and different Principles; t;he trenchant duality is fictitious, they represent in fact, the Two-in-One or rather the One-in-Two. thus,

> "There are two show are Once and play in many worlds:
> In Knowledge and Ignorance they have spoken and met
> And light and darkness are their eye's interchange.
>
> Thus have they made their play with us for roles:
> Author and actor with himself as scene,

He moves there as the Soul, a Nature she.

This whole wide world is only he and she."

Thus, the Purusha-Prakriti duality, although separate in appearance, is in fact inseparable. Wherever there is Prakriti, there is Purusha; wherever there is Purusha, there is Prakriti. Even in his inactivity he holds in himself all her force and energies ready for projection; even in the drive of her action she carries with her all his observing and mandatory consciousness as TO whole support and sense of her creative purpose."

But why is this so? Because, in their essential nature and original aspect, Purusha and Prakriti arise from the being of divine Sachchidananda. As a matter affect, "Self-conscious existence is the essential nature of the Being; that is Sat or Purusha: the Power of self-aware existence, whether drawn into itself or acting in the works of its consciousness and force, its knowledge and its will, Chit and Tapas, Chit and its Shakti,-that is Prakriti. Delight of being, Ananda, is the eternal truth of the union of this conscious being and its conscious force whether absorbed in itself or else deployed in the inseparable duality of its two aspects, unrolling the worlds and viewing them, acting in them and upholding the action, execution works and giving the sanction without which the force of Nature cannot act, executing and controlling the knowledge and the will and knowing and controlling the determinations of the knowledge-force and welfares, ministering to the enjoyment and enjoying,-the Soul possessor, observer, knower, lord of Nature, Nature expressing the being, executing the will, satisfying the self-knowledge, ministering to the delight of being of the soul. There we have, founded on the very nature of being, the *supreme and the universal relation of Prakriti with Purusha. The absolute joy of the soul in itself* and based upon that, the *absolute joy of the soul in Nature* are divine fulfillment of the relation."

Thus the apparent duality vanishes and the Two-in-One reveals Himself or Herself in the divine Sachchidananda, the Sat-Chitananda, for Sat is the Being, the Purusha, Chit is the conscious executive force or Prakriti and Ananda is the halo and aroma of their indissoluble union,

But this essential unity and union of Purusha andPrakriti are not overly realised on the lower planes of existence, the lower planes of manifestation of the Spirit. The true intrinsic relation ha been perverted there and a pramatic division and separation with all their undesirable consequences have developed alongside.

After all, what is a plane of consciousness, a plane of existence? A plane is nothing else than 'a general settled poise or world of relations' between Purusha and Prakriti, between the Soul and Nature. Now with the progressive involution or self-concealment of Sachchidananda, has ensued the progressive self-hiding of Soul and Nature, one from he other, the result being that the self-possession and the world-possession, *svaràjya* and *sàmràjya,* have become difficult to achieve at the same time. Now, depending on the nature of the dominant cosmic Principle and power of being around which the Soul and the Nature decide to weave their game of hide and seek, we have different planes of consciousness and existence. Thus we have, in ascending order, a material plane, alife-plane and the planes of mind.

But even on the highest rang of spiritual-mind planes, the absolute harmony of the union of Purusha-Prakriti is not fully recovered. Thus even though the separate liberation and static release of the soul become feasible there, the latter cannot freely possess Nature, become its conscious Lord and transform it into an effective and flawless instrument of divine manifestation.

For that we have to reach the plane of supermind, the *vij±and* or gnosis of Sachchidananda, which is not only the concentrated consciousness of the infinite Essence, [but] also and at the same time and infinite knowledge of the myriad play of the Infinite.

In the gnosis the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti, Soul and Nature, disappears in their biune unity, the dynamic mystery of the occult Supreme. The Truth-being is the Hara-Gauri of the Indian iconological symbol (the biune body of the Lord and his Spouse, Ishwara and Shakti, the right half male, the left half female); it is the double Power masculine born from and supported by the supreme Shakti of the Supreme."

But eventhen a last point remains. For, we do not want to withdraw from the material plane of existence into the Supermind's self-existent realm: we want instead the supramental union of Soul and Nature in the very bosom of the physically embodied existence here upon earth. Thus, what is essential for the fulfillment of our objective is not merely the ascent into the supramental Gnosis but the eventual transforming descent of its Consciousness Force into our entire being and nature and a concomitant or subsequent emergence of the concealed Supermind at present involved here below. This influx from above and the unveiling from below will between them remove what is left of the nature of the Ignorance. The rule of the inconscient will disappear: for the e the In conscience will be changed by the outburst of the greater secret Consciousness within it, the hidden Light, into what it always was in reality, areas of the secret Superconscience".

The supramental being, the gnostic soul, the *Vijñànamaya Purusa*, thus appearing in earth-existence will be the fist unveiled manifestation of Sachchidananda in the material universe. Not a self-oblivion in the Infinite, but an integral self-possession and world-plssession in the Infinite will be its characteristic movement. It will be the first to participate in world-action not only in the freedom, but in the power and sovereignty of the Ternal. For it recives the fullness, it has the sense of plenitude of the God head in its action it shares the force, splendid and royal march of the Infinite, is a vessel of the original knowledge, the immaculate power, the inviolable bliss, transmutes all life into the eter-

nal Light and the eternal Fire and the eternal Winde of the nectare. It possesses the infinite of the Self and it possesses the infinite of Nature... The gnostic soul is the child, but the King-child; here is the royal and eternal childhood whose toys ark the worlds and all universal Nature is the miraculous garden of the play that tires never....This biune being of Purusha-Prakriti is as if a flaming Sun anybody of Divine Lights self-carried in its orbit by its own inner consciousness and power at one with the universe, atone with a supreme Transcendent. Its madness consciousness and power vibrating with an infinite sense of freedom and intensity in its divine life-movement....-a dance this also, a whirl of mighty energies, but the Master of the dance holds the hands of His energies and keeps them to the rhythmic order, the self-traced harmonic circles of His Rasa-Lila."

Thus, with the supramental transformation of our being and nature, this earthly life will flower into the Life divine and our waking physical existence will be adivinised existence of integral consciousness and dynamis. Neither will one then have to plunge into the superconscient trance-state in order to experience the Absolute Existence or non -Existence, nor to content oneself with the Jivanmukti-status waiting all the while for the final release in Videha-Mukti. Because, then

Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life divine.

In the words of the Mother:

"In the supramental creation there will be no more...what men now call gods.

"These great divine beings themselves will be able to participate in the new creation, but for that they us put on what we may call the supramental substance on earth. And if there are some who choose to remain in their world, as they are, if they do decide not to manifest themselves *physically*, their relation with the other beings of the supramental world *on earth* will be rela-

tion of friends, of collaborators, *of equal to equal,* because the highest divine essence will have *manifested in the beings of the new supramental world on earth.*

"When the physical substance will be supramentalised, to be born on earth in a body will not be a cause of inferiority, rather the contrary, there will be gained *a plenitude which could not be obtained otherwise".*

But the question is: When is this divine Supermind going to descend into the earth-existence or the involved Supermind going to emerge? The answer is that it is no longer a question of when in the future, it is already an established fact. The divine Supermnd has descended n the year 1956 and a new world s already born, although not yet manifest to the gross physical consciousness of man. The Mother who alone with Sri Aurobindo has 'luminously laboured' for decades for the descent of the Supermind her Herself vouchasafted us this assurance:

"The greatest thing that can ever be, the most marvelous thing since the being of creation, the *miracle* has happened".

"The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality. It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognize it."

Only, the involved Supermind has not yet emerged. "The emergence is for the future, but, of course, now it is merely a question of time: the process is natural and inevitable."

Chapter-8

Sureśvara

Chapter-8

The Works of the Author of the Vártika

We now begin the examination of the Vãrtika school. All critics agree that the Vãrtikas on Srï Sañkara's Taittirïya and Brhadãranyaka Commentaries were composed by Srï Suresvara, as well as the Naiskarmya Siddhi. Our study here will therefore be confined to these works. The commentary on the Daksinãmürti Stotra called the Mãnasollãsa and the Bãlakarïda Commentary on Yãjñavalkya Smrti, which are said to have been composed by a person called Visvarüpa Ãcãrya, cannot be accepted as belonging to the Vãrtika school, not only because scholars are divided about their authenticity, but also because they advance views in contradiction with the teaching of the Vãrtikas. The Pañcïkarana Vãrtika is also left out of account for the same reasons. Therefore we shall try to determine the nature of the Vãrtika teaching with the help of the earliest mentioned three works only.

The close connection between the Brahma Siddhi and the Sambandha Vártika

We have already mentioned at the beginning of the chapter on Mandana (M.V. 91) how, in the matter of the refutation of opponents' views, there is much similarity in the line of thought of the Brahma Siddhi and Suresvara's Vãrtika. This is especially true in the case of the Brahma Siddhi and the introductory portion of Suresvara's Brhadãranyaka Vãrtika, called the Sambandha Vãrtika. This theme will be developed a little further here to help those who would like to make comparison of the two schools.

The course of trying tó explain how the Absolute can only be known through the Veda, sketches in various theories of the re-

lation between the ritual-section and the knowledge-section of the Veda and refutes them. Those same theories are also summarized for refutation in the same way in the Vārtika, mostly on the same words. For example:

(1) *The Doctrine of the Elimination off the Universe of Destinations:* Everywhere in the Veda there is taught the elimination of some distinction somewhere. Thus the ritualistic in junctions are held to be auxiliaries towards aptitude for knowledge of the Self through the visible result of eliminating differences. B.Sid. p.27; S.V. (verses) 378-83. The refutation: B. Sid. pp.28-30; S.V. 384, 389, 424-6.

(2) *The Doctrine that Pleasure-desire is eliminated through Indulgence:* It is held that the ritualistic section of the Veda promotes aptitude for knowledge of the Self by making every pleasure-desire available. B.Sid. p.27; S.V. 343-4. The refutation: B.Sid. p.30; S.V. 345-54.

(3) *The Doctrine of the Discharge of the Three Debts: It* is held that ritualistic injunctions prepare one for knowledge of the Self through securing discharge of the three debts, beginning with that to the gods. Statement and refutation: B. Sid. p. 36; S.V. 436.

(4) *View that knowledge of the Self enters the Sphere of Ritual through purifying the performer of Ritual:* B. Sed. p.28. The refutation: B. Sid. p.31; S.V. 427-35.

(5) *The Doctrine that the Whole Veda is concerned with Acts to be Done:* B.Sid. p.23 and the whole of Section Three (Niyoga Kānda); S.V.477-541. The refutation: B.Sid. pp. 25-6; S.V. 540-760.

(6) *Doctrine that Ritual may help the Rise of Knowledge because its Results differ according to Motive with which it is performed:* B.Sid. p.27. Accepted S.V. 322. Accepted with a qualification, B.Sid. p.36.

(7) *Two Views according to which Rituals are either for Purification or else Parts of the Discipline of Knowledge:* Accepted at B.Sid. pp.27-8,36. Doctrine that rituals are for awakening the desire for knowledge, but that they must be given up for the actual attainment for the Absolute: S.V.14, 322. Acceptance of the doctrine that rituals are for purification: S.V. 87,192,301.

(8) *Refutation of Difference:* B.,Did. The whole of Section Two (Tarka Kānda) : S.V. 917-86.

In these, and in other places where rival schools are examined, the two works show a striking similarity, not only of meaning but even of words.

The Rival Doctrines Examined in the Sambandha Vártika

The following is a list of some other views described for purposes of refutation in the Sambandha Vārtika which are not noticed in the Brahma Siddhi.

(1) The doctrine that symbolic meditations are enjoined for the sake of liberation. S.V.20. (2) The doctrine that liberation, understood as abiding in one's nature as individual soul, arises from ritualistic action. S.V.32. (3) Various forms of the doctrine that knowledge and action are to be combined in three ways for liberation. S.V. 357. (4) Doctrine that there is an injunction to perform repeated meditation (prasankhyāna). S.V.761. (5) The doctrine that knowledge is for the sake of meditation which will turn lead to liberation. S.V.438. (6) Doctrine that knowledge that all is the one Self is only a piece of symbolic meditation. S.V.439. (7) Doctrine of uppression of the impressions of the waking and other states. S.V.441-2. (8) Doctrine of the suppression of the mind. S.V.443.

And there are other doctrines of the same king. Why Mandana does not refer to them while Suresvara does is not clear.

Refutation of Mandana's Positions in the Vartika

The question of whether Mandana and Suresvara were the same person is much disputed that they were both Advaitins and that they each quoted for their own work than same arguments against the dualists that are to be found in the work of the other. It is also noticeable that in Mandana's book one occasionally finds the arguments and even the words of the revered Commentator Sankara. From this one may conjecture that the Advaitins had been using these same arguments with slight changes for a long time. Then came Suresvara Ãcarya, who accepted and borrowed the arguments used by Mandana and other forerunners against other schools where such arguments did not contradict his own system. But he refuted the contractions even of members of his own school if they did contradict his own system. And it appears likely that he did so at the command of his Guru. This can be substantiated by a glance at his Naiskarmya Siddhi.

> (1) It is in obedience to the command of my Guru that I expound the secret doctrine hidden in the heart of the Upanishads, which ends transmigration and takes one to immortality. I am aware that it has also been explained by others. (N.Sid. I. 3)

This book is written neither to gain fame, nor wealth, nor deferential treatment, but in order to test the metal of my own knowledge at the touch-stone of the God-realized sages. (N.Sid. I. 6)

From a consideration of these two verses one might conjecture that when Ãcãrya Mandana's fame had spread wide Suresvara Ãcãrya composed an independent treatise called the Naiskarmaya Siddhi. Its name was a faithful reflection of its contents, since it was written to help people to establish themselves in the actionless Self though knowledge alone. It was composed also with a view to refute Mandana, who counselled the one desirous of liberation to practise a combination of knowledge and action (in the form of repeated affirmation of knowledge through meditation, M.V. 98,4, *ad fin.*). The refutation was accomplished by showing that knowledge and action were in total contradiction.

Typical of the teachings that Suresvara combated in this context were the following two points. Knowledge derived from words is inevitably indirect, and only he attains liberation who has risen to immediate awareness of the Self through meditation and other active measures (M.V. 101, 5, note); the false appearances that persist even after knowledge off the Self can only be brought to an end by repeated meditation on one's vision of the reality allied to performance of sacrifices and other caste duties (B.Sid. p.35, M.V. 100,1) This had already been contradicted by Srï Sankara, as the following text shows.

> (2) The knowledge that one is (in truth) ever liberated comes from the holy texts and from no other source. And knowledge of the meaning of a text is not possible without first calling to mind the meaning of its component words. It is certain that the meaning of a word is called to mind on the basis of agreements and differences (in the way one has heard the word used and in the meanings for which it is made to stand). In this way one comes to know oneself as the pure transcendent Self, beyond pain and action. The clearest from of authoritative knowledge of the inmost Self (i.e. immediate awareness based on identity-feeling) arises from such texts as 'That thou art', just as it did from 'Thou art the tenth' (cp. M.V. 59, 14). (U.S. (verse) XVIII.190-2.

It was by quoting these words of his Guru as his authority that Suresvare refuted the doctrine of repeated meditation (Prasankhayãna Vãda; N.Sid. IV. 31-3; S. V. 206-8) and also that of liberation through a combination of action and knowledge in his Vãrtika and Naiskarmya Siddhi. To refute this doctrine of combination he wrote some verses in his Brhadãranyaka Vãrtika,

beginning with one saying that only he who was without attachment for the enjoyment of anything in this world or the next was a fit candidate for liberation.

> (3) 'Children run after external pleasures. . .' (Katha II. i. 2) and again' He who desires pleasures and dwells on them is reborn' (Mund. III. ii.2) and again 'He who has no desires. . . (being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute', Brhad. IV. iv. 6). (Having thus declared that only he who is indifferent to the enjoyment of objects in this world and the next qualifies for metaphysical Ignorance, nothing is required but metaphyscial knowledge, Sri Suresvara continues :) To remove metaphysical knowledge. And to give rise to such knowledge, nothing else is required except the virtues beginning with inner and outer control. In order to acquire these virtues, nothing is required but purification of the mind, and for purification of the mind nothing is required but the performance of the obligatory daily ritual as a duty. Since thought, word and bodily deed arise solely from ignorance of the Self (read ātma-ajnānā), when that has been cancelled by knowledge of the Self, how could there be dependence on action afterwards? (B.B.V. I. iii. 97-100)

One may note two further doctrines of the Brahma Siddhi that were refuted by Suresvara. Mandana argues as follows. Every meaningful sentence communicates a particular not previously known to the hearer. In the Vedic texts proclaiming the Absolute, we find the universal notion 'cause' and the universal notion 'being' conveyed by phrases such as 'That from which (these creatures are born)' (Taitt. III..1) and 'Not gross. . .'. These ideas (in themselves universal) acquire a particular meaning not known through other means of knowledge when their universal meaning is narrowed down by the meaning of other words in the sentence, either by way of association or of exclusion; and this particular meaning is the burden of the text (B.Sid. p. 157, cp. M. V. 99, 1). Or again the elimination of plurality may be effected through revelation. The meaning of the term 'plurality' (read prapañca-pdārtha) is already known. And the meaning of 'non-existence' is also known. The non-existence of plurality is the new truth communicated as a sentence-meaning by the association these two word-meaning (B.Sid. p. 157, cp. M.V. 99,1).

These two theories are refuted by Suresvara. He remarks again and again that there is no association or exclusion of word-meanings in texts teaching the identity of the true Self with the Absolute, because the inmost non-dual Self cannot be the meaning expressed by any sentence (N.Sid. III.25, 26;76. S.V. 902,909-10; B.B.V. I. iv. 1406-8, 1431; III.iv. 29,33,46; III.v. 100, 184,190). In explaining the text 'The Infinite, verily, remains (Brhad.V.i.1) he expresses himself thus:

> (4) Reallity, which does not admit of any distinction between God and the individual soul, appears through Ignorance to include this distinction. When Ignorance is abolished through the knowledge that says "neither this nor that', only the Self remains. There is seen to be no association or exclusion of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning, no even a negation - when Ignorance, the root of all these false notions, is abolished through authoritative knowledge derived from the Veda in the manner explained. (B.B.V. V.i. 21-2)

The Treatment of the Doctrine of Bhartrpraanca in the The Vartika

We have spoken so far as if the principle doctrine to be refuted in the Naiskarmya Siddhi and the two Vārtikas was that of Mandana Misra. But it should be remembered that what has been described above could equally well have been intended to refute Bhartrprapañca. And there are some strong reasons for supposing this to have actually been the case. Because Bhartrprapañca was an exponent of the doctrine of Duality in Non duality, he accepted the doctrine that the meaning even of the supreme texts of the Veda was based on the mutual association and exclusion of the word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning.

When, in the passage just quoted above, the Vārtika said 'There is seen to be no association or exclusion of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning, not even a negation' (B.B.V. V. i. 22) — that a occurred in the course of a refutation that followed a summary of Bhartrprapañca's interpretation of the text 'That is infinite...'

Like Mandana, Bhartrprapañca advocated a combination of knowledge and action for liberation (M. v. 87). Also like Mandana, he accepted that for liberation there had to be a new form of immediate knowledge, different from that conveyed orally by the texts (M .v. 84). Again, it is true that Suresvara refers (as if speaking of Mandana) to the doctrine of those who say 'The knowledge "I am the Absolute" arising from the upanishadic texts depend son the association of the meanings of its different component words and hence does not penetrate to the real (non-dual) nature of the Self' (N.Sid. I. 67, prose intro.). Nevertheless, he attributes this teaching to those who set store on the injunction 'Once the wise man has acquired knowledge of the Self alone, he should practise repeated affirmation' (Brhad. IV. iv. 21). And he does to anywhere take notice of the alternative to obedience to this text advocated by Mandana in the words: 'Or alternatively it could be maintained that an injunction would be useless here, as the desirable end which it promised would already be attained. Prolonged brooding on something in one's mind may give rise to immediate apprehension of it, and that is a result already attainable in this very life' (B.Sid. p. 154, M. V. 98.4).

And there is another point. The whole tenor of Sri Sankara's commentary on the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad is for him to establish his own method of interpretation while refuting that of Bhartrprañca. There is every reason to suspect that accomplishing this was the main reason for the composition both of the commentary and of Suresvara's Vārtika explaining it. And we have described at length in Chapter V above on Bhartrprapañca how both the commentary and the Vārtika establish their own

view of the meaning of the text of the Brhadāaranyaka after refuting that of Bhartrprapaāca at every step. But we find no elaborate refutation of Mandana of this kind either in the commentary or the Vārtika. And we find the following remark inthe commentary, referring to Bhartrprapañca: 'therefore, all those who are clever at thinking up different interpretations of the Veda explain the meaning of the upanishadic text differently. Even so, I would accept anything that retext differently. Even so, I would accept anything that represented the true meaning of the Veda. I have nothing against them personally' (Brhad. Bh. II. iii. 6, cp. M.v. 10, III, not, p. 26).

> (1) They say (that is, Bhartrprapañca says,) 'One should always meditate intensely on the Absolute, the real, in its supreme form as the whole, both as a collective whole and as a system of inter-related parts'. Sometimes he speaks of the Absolute's constituting a whole as implying a series of states, along with a certain being assuming those states; sometimes he describes the Absolute in terms of a cause associated with its effects. Sometimes the great thinker describes it as a whole divided into different parts, as a wheel is divided into hub, felly and spokes. Did he learn *that*, I wonder, from the true tradition? (B.B.V. I. iv. 948-50)...
>
> There is a (so-called) great expert in the tradition who holds, for sooth, that plurality and unity are one and the same. He said that name, form and action are both different and non-different from the Absolute (B.B.V. I. vi. 46) . . .
>
> And there are more passages in this vein, such as: 'There is another of these great luminaries (Bhartrprapañca) who explained he relation as follows . . .' (B.B.V. II.i.21). 'Students must examine these two views (those of Sankara and Bhartrprapañca) and accept whichever seems to them best' (B.B.V. II.i.255). 'A certain person who regarded himself as a great expert inthe Upanishads invented an interpretation

of own, with great ingenuity, and spoke as follows, quite without any understanding of what the Upanishads actually mean' (B.B.V. II.ii.90). 'There is another Absolutist (brahma-vādin) who explains the example (of the spokes, hub and felly of a well given at Brhadāranyaka II. v.15) differently in order to suit his own dogmas about the Self constituting a whole and so forth' (B.B.V. II.v.67, cp. M.V.86,4). 'Here, a certain great genious taught, as a special piece of wisdom supplied free by Vaisvānara, that a person is not finally liberated even when he has been liberated from his two bodies (B.B.v. III.ii.41). "Therefore the whole doctrine that the Absolute is both one as a collective unity and many as the differentiated parts is a mere superstition. It may be a special piece of wisdom supplied free by Vaisvānara, but it does not obey the rules of reason (B.B.V. IV. iii.1187). Depending (not on reason but) on a free donation of wisdom from Vaisvānara... (B.B.V.IV. iv. 391). This was the explanation given by that august sage, the great Bhartrprapañca, supported neither by the Veda nor by reason (B.B.V. IV. iv.412). He explained it otherwise with marvellous ingenuity . . . (B.B.V.V.i.28).

In these and other passages, the doctrine of Absolutism as infected with plurality, and the doctrine of liberation through a combination of knowledge and activity were tirelessly mocked and criticized in hundreds of ways. When Suresvara repeatedly specified the true nature of the Self or Absolute as neither transcendent nor immanent he probably had Bhartrprapañca in mind—Bhartrprapañca who held that the Absolute was a unity as a collective whole and a plurality as a system of interrelate ad parts (B.B.V. I.iv. 529, 656, 1445; Ii.i.88, 361; Ii.iii.12; II.iv.18; II.iv.411,473; III.ix.156; IV.iii.368; IV.iv.569,846-7,1298; V.i.10).

Putting all this together, it seems more reasonable to suppose that Bhartrprapañca was singled out as the chief opponent to be refuted. And there is another related point that requires investigation. If Bhartrprapañca's vrtti on the Brhadāranyaka was

so well known in Mandana's day, why is it that meticulous philosopher did not so much as vouchsafe it a glance? As I am not myself able to settle this doubtful question, I just raise it and offer it to philologists and historians, while we ourselves will carry on with the matter in hand.

Because the unity and sole reality of the self expresses itself by nature as awareness, it is self-evident

The revered Commentator pointed out that the Self was self trevident. He said, 'The Self is not a thing that a *supersedes* anything else; for it is self-established and self-manifest. The means of knowledge belong to it. It does not depend on them to establish its existence (B.S.Bh.II.iii.7, M.V.28,3).' We do not base our doctrine of the unity and sole reality of the Self on the authoritative means of knowledge, since the Self is bare immediate awareness by very nature. So we shall show later that no means of knowledge apply to it. The means of knowledge themselves rest in and depend on awareness -this text of Suresvara (N.Sid. I.89) shows that his teaching fully agreed with Sri Sankara on this point. In many places in the Vārtika it is pointed out that the presence and also the absence of means of knowledge can only be established by the Self as awareness, and that the Self is self-evident. For instance there is the verse Knower, knowledge, known and certitude all depend for their establishment on the presence of the Self. On what, then, could the Self depend for its own establishment? (B.B.V, I.iv.870), and there are many other similar texts (e.g. B.B.V. II.i.552, III.iv.91, IV iii.191-6, IV.iii.891...).

Metaphysical Ignorance in Suresvara

The revered Commentator, it is well known, said: 'Superimposition thus defined the wise call Ignorance' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro., cp. M.V.p.19). Mandana, for his part, spoke of natural (beginningless) metaphysical Ignorance in the individual souls

(B.Sid. p.12). But he posed the alternative, either non-apprehension or false apprehension (B.Sid. p.9), and then expressed a preference by saying Ignorance is positive error (B.Sid. p.11, cp. M.V. 92). He also said, Because both Ignorance and the individual soul are beginning less, like the cycle of seed and sprout, it follows that the question of circular argument does not arise' (B.Sid. p.10, cp. M.V,94,1). Bhartrprapañca said, 'Ignorance is failure to realize "I am all"' (M.V.820. It arises of its own accord, like desert places on parts of the surface of the eart (M.V.. 79, 1, note).

The sentences referred to in Sri Sankara's Commentary when he was considering Bhartrprapañca's doctrine have been given in very summary form here. But they are clearly reported in Suresvara's Vārtika and quoted in the sub-commentary there. 'Ignorance is a power of the Lord, even though "natural (uncaused)". Therefore, when it is manifest, it affects only a part of the Lord and has its seat in this individual soul' (Āñandagiri on B.B.V. II. iii.122). 'As deserts and the like occupy some places on the earth only, and are not universal attributes characterizing the whole surface of the earth everywhere, so Ignorance is not an attribute of the supreme Principle' (Ānandagiri on B.B.V, II.iii.124).

Suresvara, however, says that metaphysical Ignorance is absence of knowledge and the effects of that. It is established through one's own direct experience, not through means of knowledge or proof. Since it is established through immediate experience alone, it escapes the grip of the various means of knowledge. For it is 'established only through lack of reflection'. Suresvara says this repeatedly. 'Failure to realise that one's own Self is the sole reality is called Ignorance. Its seat is the Self, as immediate experience. It is the seed of transmigration. Its destruction constitutes the liberation of the soul' (N.Sid. I.7). 'The effects of Ignorance are "established only through luck of reflection" even like Ignorance itself. Therefore, when Ignorance is destroyed, the whole world is destroyed and is turned into pure

Consciousness' (B.B.V. I.iv.1329). 'As metaphysical Ignorance is established through immediate experience only, just like the immediate experience "I am the Absolute", so, when destroyed through the rise of an authoritative cognition, it dissolves and turns into the Self' (S.V.117). These texts show that Ignorance is occasionally declared by Suresvara to be subject to cancellation through the authoritative means of knowledge. We shall here quote some further verses from the Vārtikas to throw light on this.

> (1) The sole cause here is impermanent Ignorance, which means 'I do not know'. It is established (not by any authoritative means of knowledge but) only through one's own experience of it, like the owl's experience of night of day. (T.B.V. II.176)
>
> *The phrase 'cause here' means the cause of apparent delimitations superimposed on the Self.*
>
> (2) He who would wish to see Ignorance wit the sight produced by the authoritative means of knowledge is like one hoping to see the darkness in the depths of a cave with a lamp. Whatever appears here in the world as 'not-self' is a result of Ignorance. Hence it is also called Ignorance. But knowledge has only one form, that of the Self. Ignorance has no other nature but failure to apprehend the Self. Ignorance is non-knowledge' in the sense of 'the opposite of knowledge', as a 'non-friend' is the opposite of a friend. The conception will always be intelligible in this sense. (T.B.V. II.177-9).
>
> *The nature of Ignorance as not-self is simply non-perception of the Self. Non-perception of the Self is called Ignorance (avidyā, literally non-knowledge) because it is the contradictory of knowledge (as 'non-cat', in logic, is the contradictory of 'cat').*
>
> (3) Nor can the theory that Ignorance arises spontaneously from the supreme Self, like desert places appearing here

and there on the surface of the earth, be correct. If Ignorance arose from the supreme Self, it would mean that liberation would be impossible. Or if Ignorance were destroyed, then on this theory it would imply the destruction of the Self,, the erroneous doctrine of the Buddhists. (B.B.V. II.iii.130-1)

These two verses were composed to refute Bhartrprapañca.

Objections and answers on the subject of Metaphysical Ignorance

In the course of reflecting on the topic of the cessation of Ignorance, the following hypothetical objection was raised in the Brahma Siddhi.

(1) Since the Absolute is eternal, its essence is indestructible. Ignorance, therefore, (which requires to be destroyed) cannot be of the nature of the Absolute. Ignorance must either be or not be different from the Absolute. If it is not different, what could there be in it that could be destroyed? So let us say that Ignorance is mere non-apprehension. It could not then be anything different from the Absolute. . . . But knowledge which puts an end to Ignorance, is eternally present in the Absolute. And nothing else apart from the Absolute exists... If, on the other hand, metaphysical Ignorance were positive wrong apprehension, then how could it be brought to an end? For we have now pointed out how such a theory has defects, whether Ignorance be taken as being of the nature of the Absolute or not of its nature. (B.Sid. pp. 8-9, summarized)

The answer given to this objection was as follows.

(2) ignorance is not part of the nature of the Absolute, nor is it a second thing over against it, nor is it altogether unreal, nor is it real. That is why this Ignorance is called Māyā and a false appearance. If it were the nature of anything, then, whether different from that thing or not, it would be perfectly

real and so would not be Ignorance. But if it were totally unreal, like a flower supposed to be growing in the sky, it would not enter into experience. So it is indeterminable (either as real or unreal, B.Sid. p.9)... If the matter is conceived thus, Ignorance may be taken as belonging to the individual souls, regarded as different from the Absolute, without the defects complained of by the opponent, (B.Sid. p.10, summarized)

On the same topic, an objection is quoted from the Sloka Vārtika of Kumārila.

(3) If ignorance were the true nature of anything, it could not be extirpated ever. For what exists naturally can only be destroyed by the advent of some different external factor. But those who claim that all is the one Self cannot admit the advent of any different external factor. (S.V. Sambandhñksepa Parihara 85-6; cp. M.V.95, intro.)

The refutation of the objection by Mandana is through appeal to the in determinability of Ignorance. But Ignorance is never found referred to as indeterminable anywhere in Suresvara's Vārtika. It is there accepted as being of the nature of non-apprehension, expressed as the feeling 'I do not know'. So we must think how this objection would have been met by Suresvara. In this connection, the following verses are worthy of consideration.

(4) Though this metaphysical Ignorance is natural, it is manifest only on account of the Self as immediate experience. It is ousted and destroyed by knowledge, as darkness is destroyed by the rise of the sun. Beginningless Ignorance is seen to be destroyed in an instant by metaphysical knowledge, which has beginning in time. We do not accept that such knowledge requires reaffirmation. Though his our inmost Self is thus self-luminous and is the Witness of all Ignorance and its effects, yet it is not properly known before metaphysical knowledge has arisen through the

upanishadic discipline, as our won immediate experience (of 'I do not know') indicates. (S.V. 1088-90)

Here is what the passage means. Ignorance is natural, for we have the immediate experience 'I do not know'. And we see everywhere in experience how prior absence of knowledge is removed once and for all through adventitious knowledge, without there being any question of the need for re-affirmation of such knowledge. Nor should one raise the objection 'How could there be Ignorance in the Absolute, which is knowledge by nature?' For before the rise of metaphysical knowledge through the upanishadic texts as administered by a Teacher, the Self can appear (through Ignorance) both as the ignorant one and as unknown, though itself the Witness of all knowledge and Ignorance. And so in this wayour metaphysical Ignorance, even though natural (and so beginningless), is brought to an end buy the adventitious metaphysical knowledge arising from the Vedic texts. Nor should one raise the objection, 'How can this be so, if nothing apart from the Absolute exists?' For we accept all experience as it comes before the rise of metaphysical knowledge.

Very well. But how do we explain how Ignorance could be established by immediate experience? And if it can be shown that it is so established, how could it be that defects are not introduced into the Absolute through contact with Ignorance and its effects? And how could it, if established by immediate experience, be brought to an end? On this subject we have the following verses.

(5) Everyone, even children, will express their natural Ignorance based one experience when asked about something of which they have no knowledge. They will say, 'I do not know anything about it'... In regard to things that are entirely beyond the range of experience, like things on the roof of the Himalayas, waking experiences thus no different from dreamless sleep. There is no break here in experience itself, as we have the experience "I do not know'. And when

we see something that formerly we did not see, (there must have been experience of not seeing since) we know afterwards 'Formerly I did not know it'. (S.V.993, 995-6).

In things that are totally beyond the range of experience, one knows from one's own experience of 'I do not know' that they are not known. This is established first, and then Suresvard goes on to show how a person may say of something he now eyes, 'Up to now, I did not know it'. The idea is the show that all ignorance is establishes by experience.

(6) Ignorance is established by one's own experience, even though the Self is free from Ignorance. Before the rise of the knowledge that all is the one Self, we have the experience 'I donot know'. (B.B.V. I.IV.216).

In that which, because it is of the very nature of immediate awareness, there can be no Ignorance, there is nevertheless, before the rise of metaphysical knowledge of the Self, the notion established through immediate awareness 'I do not know myself'.

(7) That principle (the Self) is self-revealed. Therefore it is ever free from Ignorance. That which is ever free from Ignorance is free also from the impurities that spring from the latter. (B.B.V. I.iv.213).

The meaning is that the Absolute is not touched by Ignorance or its effects because it is ever self-evident to itself.

(8) He who has known the Selt in its true nature knows that its connection with Ignorance impossible in past, present or future. It is then seen that the notion that the pre Self was connected with anything else was only established through lack of reflection. (B.B.V. I.iv.217)

The enlightened one who knows the Self in immediate experience has the conviction 'Ignorance is impossible in me in past, present or future'. The notion of connection with Ignorance was

establish only through lack of reflection - that is the meaning. The fact that Ignorance and its effects are established only through lack of reflection is often mentioned in the Vārtika, for example in such places as: B.B.V. I.iv.1170, 1329, 1341; II.iii.192, 224; III.iv.131; III.vi.42; III.viii.31; IV.iv.307.

> (9) Merely from the rise of the correct idea from the text 'That thou art' one find that Ignorance, together with its effects, never existed in the past, does not exist now, and will never exist in the future. And so it is not possible to show by authoritative means of knowledge that Ignorance belongs to the Self, or to explain its nature or indicate its source. For its sole existence is our experience of it. He who is afflicted with Ignorance cannot determine the truth about that Ignorance. It is only one who has experienced the final reality who can make the discovery, by reference to that, 'Ignorance does not exits'. (S.V. 183-4, 179).

The cessation of Ignorance is only intelligible if Ignorance is seen to be established only through lack of reflection. It is only through the vision of one who has known the Self that one can say, 'It does to exist', because only after such vision will one have seen that, unlike the Self, Ignorance is not self-established. And so, from he standpoint of vision of the final truth, questions such as 'What is the nature of Ignorance?' or 'Where did it come from?' are simply not raised (as it is known that Ignorance had no existence).

In the view of Suresvara, lack of metaphysical knowledge is the cause of transmigratory experience. Therefore he lays it down: 'Failure to realize that one's own Self is the sole reality is called metaphysical Ignorance. Its seat is the Self as immediate experience. It is the seed of transmigration. Its destruction constitutes the liberation of the soul' (N.Sid. I.7).

On this point, the Mimamsakas and others raise an objection. 'Absence of authoritative knowledge may assume one of

three forms - wrong knowledge, absence of knowledge or doubt. Two of these, (wrong knowledge and osubt), being positive realities, are explicable as due to some defect in the factors of knowledge' (Kumārila, S.V. Codana Sutrā 54). Basing themselves on this text from an acknowledged authority,they hold that erroneous knowledge, being a positive reality, can functions a cause, but that mere lack of knowledge cannot be regarded as the cause of tranmigratory experience, because it is not a positive reality. This was probably the reason why Ācārya Mandana laid the main emphasis on positive erroneous knowledge as the nature of Ignorance, remarking, 'Non-apprehension, being a non-entity (abhāva), cannot be the cause of anything' (M.V.92, intro.). Against this, Ssuresvara argued as follows:

> (10) Are you saying that, in the case of error, what is negated by an authoritative means of knowledge is *reality?* If reality were negated thus, what would be left for an authoritative means of knowledge to know?... How could false knowledge to be reality? The false is not the real. To speak of knowledge being false and it being reality - that could only come from a great genius like Kumārila. Even if the erroneous notion of a snake or the like in regard to a rope were taken as a reality in itself, it would still be unreal appearance when identified with the rope, and, as such, would be contradicted and cancelled by knowledge of the latter. If erroneous knowledge had a cause, as it does in Kumārila's theory, then he ought to be able to state that cause. If he were to say it was a real effect but had no cause, that would be laughed out of court even by children... The fact is that in the triad 'absence of knowledge', 'wrong knowledge' and 'doubt', 'absence (B.B.V. I.iv.423, 425-7, 1368)

What is argued here is that erroneous knowledge is an unreality just like (that non-entity) of knowledge. That is why it can be contradicted and cancel absenceed by authoritative knowledge. Since erroneous knowledge can only arise as a result of ab-

sence of knowledge, the Mimāmsakas' objection was incorrect.

The treatment of Ignorance by Sri Sankara and Suresvara Compared

In the introduction to his Brahma Sñtra Commentary, Sri Sankara declares that erroneous cognition is superimposition. He says: ;'And yet, though these two principles (Self and non-self, pure subject and object) are utterly distinct in nature, there is a failure to distinguish one from the other, and each, together with its attributes, is superimposed on and identified with the other. And from that there results this natural worldly experience, based on erroneous knowledge and involving a synthesis of the real with the false, which expresses itself as "I am this" and "This is mine"' (M.V. 22,4). He also says 'Superimposition is of the nature of a false idea' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro. ad fin.). And he declares metaphysical Ignorance to be that very erroneous cognition, synonymous with superimposition.

In Suresvara's Vārtika, however, metaphysical Ignorance is said to be non-discrimination, of the nature of lack of or absence of knowledge. For example, we have: 'The relation between the Self and Ignorance of the Self is held to be that between 'the Self' and 'being constituted by the Self without being aware of the fact'. This fundamental failure of discrimination, called Ignorance of one's true Self, is said to be the cause of (the apparent existence of all) the creatures of the world' (B.V. I.iv.381). A further verse was added to indicate that absence of knowledge was the one core of erroneous knowledge. 'Absence of knowledge, constantly present as it is, is identical with erroneous knowledge; as cause and effect, they are constant conemitants' (B.B.V. I.iv.386). An he makes his view clear with the verse, 'From doubt we deduce absence of knowledge. From wrong knowledge we deduce the same. If we are asked, 'What is the essence of doubt and wrong knowledge?' we reply 'Their essence is absence of knowledge' (B.B.V. I.iv. 440).

The revered Commentator Sankara had declared openly that the sole purpose of the Upanishads was to put an end to superimposition, saying,' And the entire upanishadic teaching is begun to communicate knowledge of the sole reality of the one Self, and thus to put an end to this superimposition, the cause of all evil' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro. ad fin.) But Suresvara reversed this view and stated his own view very clearly as follows: 'When right knowledge arises it cancels and contradicts absence of knowledge. When that has been cancelled, there is no need for further efforts to cancel positive erroneous cognition. The fact that a false cognition can be cancelled is only so because it implies absence of knowledge. How can false cognition harm us when its root has been destroyed?' (B.B.V. I.iv.437-8) So the question arises which view is between, and I shall explain what appears to me to be the truth in this matter.

The revered Commentator said that failure to discriminate the Self and the not-self was the cause of their mutual superimposition. But in saying this he was only concerned with the mind functioning as the basis of empirical experience. For he says, 'through the failure to distinguish one from the other (Self and not-self)... there results this worldly experience based on wrong knowledge' (B.S.Bh.I.i.1, intro.). In his Gitā commentary, too, we find the words, 'a "conjunction" which is infact (not a feal conjunction but) a mere mutual superimposition of the Field and the Knower of the Field (M.V. p. 35) together with their attributes, a superimposition that is conditioned by a failure to discriminate two utterly distinct entities one from the other' (Bh.G.Bh.XIII.26, cp. M.V.251,6). In ordinary worldly experience, superimposition of silver onto a piece of shell occurs when there is failure to discriminate between the two phenomena, shell and silver. When the revered Commentator said that our mutual superimposition of Self and not-self was conditioned by a failure to distinguish between the two, he was assuming for purposes of exposition that the same thing that happens in the case of the shell-silver error happens also in the case of that superimposition of Self

and not-self that conditions all empirical experience. But the two cases are not the same. In the case of the worldly example, the one who saw the silver was already established as individual empirical experience before he saw it. In the case of the mutual superimposition of the Self and not-self, however, the Self is not already established as an individual experience before that superimposition is made. The Self, at that stage, is not (yet an individual experiencer and so into) yet in a position to 'fail to discriminate Self and not self'. So we cannot speak of any such failure to discriminate as the cause of the mutual superimposition of Self and not self. For the teaching is that becoming an individual experiencer can only occur through the said superimposition. It follows that (in the case of this initial superimposition that makes all others possible) it was not intended to assert real temporal sequence between non-discrimination and superimposition, but only logical sequence according to the conceptions of the human mind-the conception of superimposition implies the conception of non-discrimination as its logically prior condition.

As for the objection that there are no exceptions to the rule that absence of knowledge is the cause of all empirical phenomena, because wrong knowledge is its effect—this objection may be answered on similar lines as follows. The whole notion of cause and effect, we may say, falls within superimposition. For until superimposition had itself already come into being, it could not set up temporal or causal sequence, which depend on superimposition.

Hence our own view is that, in relation to the Self, all appearance of non-apprehension, doubt and wrong-apprehension itself superimposition, and that in this context there is no occasion to enquire into the nature of its material or efficient cause, as there might be in the case of the incidental superimpositions that occur in the course of empirical experience. For the reversed Commentator says, 'Thus this natural (i.e. uncaused) beginning less and endless superimposition, which is of the nature of false

supposition...' (B.S. Bh.I.i.1, intro. ad fin.)

And Suresvara accepts this same view, but expresses it in a different way by saying 'Absence of knowledge, constantly present as it is, is identical with erroneous knowledge' (B.B.V,I.iv.386, cp. M.V. p.311). So one should not suppose that there is any fundamental difference between the two systems on this head. When the matter is examined in this light, it is fair to see Suresvara's treatment of non-apprehension and false apprehension as directed only to refuting a particular form of the theory that metaphysical Ignorance was erroneous cognition—the form in which that doctrine was advanced by another school (that of Mandana). But wrong apprehension, non-apprehension and doubt can only occur in the case of an individual experiencer (i.e. within the realm of superimposition). Such is our own view of the matter.

Enquiry into the seat of ignorance and the object with it conceals

The Brahma siddhi raises the question 'To who does metaphysical ignorance belong?' and answer 'We say "it belongs to the individual souls"' (B.Sid. p.10). We have already examined this view (M.V.94;95). Bhartrprapañca held that metaphyscial ignorance springs spontaneously from the Absolute, and, modifying a portion of the latter, has its seat in the individual soul. It is, however, a characteristic of the not-self. Listen now to the words of Suresvara.

> (1) Now, Ignorance cannot exist in the void. It must always be Ignorance of someone *about* something. Further, we have already established that two categories exist, and only two, the Self and the not-self. From this it follows that the seat of Ignorance (the conscious being which Ignorance affects) cannot be the not-self. For the very nature of the not-self is Ignorance, and Ignorance cannot affect Ignorance. Even if it could, what difference would the rise of Ignorance in Igno-

rance bring about (that we could say that it was an event at all?)

Nor is the attainment of knowledge possible in the not-self, that one could argue that there must have been some contradictory Ignorance in the not-self (for it to negate). Further, the not-self is born of Ignorance. It is absurd to suppose that which is logically and causally prior can only exist supported by and dependent on its own effect. Nor, again, has the not-self any form independent of and different from Ignorance, whereby it could serve as its seat and support.

These arguments (which refute the possibility of the not self serving as the seat of Ignorance) also show that it cannot be the object concealed by Ignorance either. Therefore the not-self is neither the seat of Ignorance nor the object concealed by Ignorance.

Hence we conclude, as the only remaining alternative, that it is the Self alone which is both the seat of and the object concealed by Ignorance. All of us have the experience "I do not know', and in the Veda we hear 'I am only a knower of the mantras, my lord; I do not know the Self' (Chānd. VIII.i.3).

(Nor do the arguments which tell against the not-self as seat of Ignorance apply to the Self.) The Self, indeed, is not identical with Ignorance, since its nature is pure Consciousness. Moreover, (the rise of) Ignorance in the Self produces a difference in the form of an obstruction of knowledge. And attainment of knowledge is possible because the Self is the source of knowledge. Nor has the Self the characteristic of being an effect of Ignorance, (which, as we have seen, prevented the not-self from functioning as its seat); for it is rock-firm and raised high above all change by nature. And finally, the conscious Self has a form and existence independent of those of Ignorance, whereby it can serve as a seat for the latter. Hence we conclude that it is the Self alone that is affected by Ignorance.

What, then, is the object concealed by this Ignorance pertaining to the Self/ The Self is that object. But is it not a fact that Ignorance is incompatible with the Self, since the latter is of the very nature of knowledge, and is without differentiation (so that it cannot serve as a seat for Ignorance, which would imply a distinction between the seat and the thing seated)? And is it not the case that the Self gives rise to knowledge, and is contradictory to Ignorance in other way too?

To this objection we reply that Ignorance is compatible with the Self. For in reality the Self remains undifferentiated. It appears to become differentiated into knower, knowledge and known through mere Ignorance alone, just as it is through mere Ignorance that the rope appears to become a snake—the Self and the rope remaining in reality quite unaffected. Hence when Ignorance is shaken off there is complete absence of all the evils of duality. (N.Sid.III.1, intro.)

And Suresvara's view is that from the standpoint of the highest truth there is no Ignorance for anyone.

> (2) No.The notion that Ignorance has its seat in the Absolute and belongs to it is itself only imagined in Ignorance. From the standpoint of the Absolute, Ignorance can into way exist. (S.V.176).

What is here said is that there is no other metaphysical Ignorance, with its seat in the not-self, over and above the Ignorance seated in the Self that obscures the Self. But this does not mean that one can interpret Suresvara to be saying that there is no other Ignorance at the empirical level, such as Ignorance of shell in the shell-silver error. That would disagree with his arguments mentioned several times in the previous section (M.V.112) and supported with the usual examples like the rope-snake, about absence of knowledge being a factor (and the fundamental factor) in error, over and above the erroneous cognition itself. But from the standpoint of the highest truth, there is only one Igno-

rance, which has the Self for its seat and also for the object which it conceals. There are not really two different kinds of Ignorance. And that is all he wished to say. This will be made clear at M.V.115 (where he denies all reality to the silver ereor). We have already referred at M.V. 69,9 to his refutation of the doctrine of two kinds of Ignorance. That was said in the course of introducing a refutation of the Prasankhyāna Vadins (exponents of the doctrine that liberation comes through repeated meditation on the texts), whose doctrine was as follows:

> (3) They (the Prasankhyāna Vādins) hold that there are a two kinds of Ignorance, natural and adventitious. The adventitious kind applies to worldly objects, the natural kind to the Self. Adventitious Ignorance disappears through the rise of knowledge occurring once, as in the case of the prince brought up as a forest-dweller and thinking himself to be such, and who remembered he was a prince when a minister came to tell him, 'You are to a forester, you are a prince'. Natural Ignorance, though it may be removed through these of knowledge occurring once, nevertheless returns, as we see from examples of attachment and other defects arising from Ignorance once more, even in the case of those who have known the metaphysical truth. (B.B.V. IV.iv. 881-3)

This confirms our thesis, as it shows that Suresvara was aware of the doctrine of two kinds of Ignorance and rejected it.

In the same way, in the system of the revered Commentator himself, by whom ignorance is identified with superimposition, the Self is the seat of Ignorance just as it is felt to be in practical experience (in the form 'I do not know'). But there is no occasion for subtle theories about it. For the whole notion of knowledge and ignorance itself belongs to the sphere of ignorance. On this we might quote the following.

> (4) If you ask 'To whom does this Ignorance belong?' we reply 'To you who ask this question'. If you then ask, 'But does not the Veda say that I am the Lord?' we reply, 'If you are awake to this (you will see that) there is no Ignorance for anybody'. (B.S.Bh.IV.i.3.)
>
> (5) It may be asked, 'Whose is this Ignorance"/ The reply is, 'It belongs to him to whom it appears to belong'. (Bh.G.Bh XIII.2)
>
> (6) The Teacher says: You take that which is the supreme Self and which is not subject to transmigration wrongly, and have the conviction 'I am subject to transmigration'. You take that which does not perform action as a performer of action, you take one who does not enjoy empirical experience as the empirical experiencer, you take that which alone really exists as if it were non-existent. That is metaphysical Ignorance. (U.S. (prose) section 50)

Here also we see that the teachings of Sri Sankara and Suresvara are essentially the same. Both take absence of knowledge and erroneous superimposition as fundamentally one.

The Operation of the Means of Knowledge

The fact of objects being unknown is not established by the means of knowledge (perception, inference, revelation, etc.,) because it is the invariable pre-condition before a means of knowledge can be applied. If it could be established by a valid means of knowledge that an object was unknown, this would imply the absurd result that the state of a thing as unknown would persist for ever (whereas we know that things previously unknown sometimes come to be known, cp. M.V.114,2 and 3). For the same reason, it cannot be established by the valid means of knowledge that things are in doubt or erroneously represented (since valid knowledge removes the doubt and misrepresentation, S.V.688). Indeed, the means of knowledge only apply to what is totally unknown (B.B.V, I.iv.258). Perception and the rest are means of knowledge precisely because they put an end to igno-

rance of pots and other objects, which latter are themselves revealed as unknown only in and through (the Self as) immediate experience. Therefore the means of knowledge never bear on the not-self without also bearing on the supreme Self (S.V. 1002). Pots and other worldly objects are known only through an authoritative means of knowledge, and do not lose their condition of being unknown without one. The Self, however, being the self-established reality, may be understood to lose its condition of being unknown directly through the means of valid knowledge (the Vedic text) and without an act of cognition producing as resultant cognition. (S.V.1004).

Ānandagiri explains this verse of Suresvara differently. He says: 'The Self cannot be known without the help of a cognition through the means of valid knowledge (i.e. the Veda), on account of its very nature as inmost Self and reality. For it is only consciousness in the form of a cognition through a means of valid knowledge (as opposed to the Self as pure Consciousness) that contradicts Ignorance. Consciousness in its pure form does to do so (since it co-exists with it as its Witness)'

This is not in contradiction with the true teaching of the system. Nevertheless, I submit that what Suresvara is really saying in the present verse is as follows. Pots and other worldly objects established by the empirical means of knowledge depend on the self-luminous cognition resulting from the means of valid knowledge to lose their state of being unknown. The Self, however, loses it directly through the Vedic text (M.V.116). It does not depend on a self-luminous 'resultant cognition' from the application of one of the means of knowledge to lose its state of being unknown. For it is non-different from right-knowledge by nature.

In truth, however, what was really not-self could not even reach the stage of being unknown. The great philosophers of all schools hold that in practical experience objects like pots are unknown before the rise of the cognition through which they come to be known (B.B.V IV.iii.158). However, there are no distinctions

in reality. Hence the word 'being' on refer to only one entity, and it is that and that alone which is unknown. The individual expereincer and the means of knowledge at his disposal are both experienced as appearances of a self-luminous entity. And it is that entity which is Being, and (because it is the only reality) it is that and that alone which is unknown (N.Sid. III.7-8).

Again, a means of knowledge establishes an object, like a piece of shell that is already existent before that means of knowledge is applied. It does not establish the existence of anything totally non-existent. But it would have been wrong to have said that the illusory silver for which the shell was mistaken was existent but unknown, like the shell was. And it would have been wrong to have said that the silver was eternally existent but unknown, like the Self. Therefore it is wrong, in the case of illusory silver, to say that a means of knowledge is applied to remove a special increment of Ignorance concealing the silver, over and above the ignorance that conceals the Self (B.B.V. IV.iii.166-7). It is the unknown shell that is wrongly interpreted as silver. In the same way the Self is wrongly interpreted as the not-self by those who have not gained metaphysical knowledge. In the example, knowledge of the illusory silver is not knowledge through a valid means of knowledge, as here the existence of silver independent of the illusory cognition is never established. Nor is the silver-illusion based on the application of a valid means of knowledge to the shell, as Ignorance of the shell is not removed (B.B.V. IV.iv.904).

In the case of erroneous knowledge of the Self, the phenomenon that the silver-illusion example was intended to illustrate, no cognition bearing on the not-self are examples of the application of valid cognition. The not-self can neither be known nor unknown, any more than the illusory silver can (because it does note exist). Nor can the Self be known through a valid cognition bearing on the not-self; for a cognition bearing on the not-self will not destroy the Ignorance relating to the Self. From the empirical

standpoint, however, the various means of knowledge give rise to valid knowledge in their respective spheres. The application of a valid means of knowledge results in cognition (pramā), which, because it is of the nature of immediate experience, is itself identical with the Self. Hence (from the empirical standpoint in which they have their play) all the means of valid cognition (appear to) communicate knowledge of that Self which is revealed in the Upanishads. But that,being self-established neither comes nor goes. It does not stand in deed of a valid means of knowledge to reveal it (T.B.V. II.526). We are familiar, however, in practical experience with the feeling 'I do not know' in relation to it. In this sense we are ignorant of it, and the valid means of cognition called the Veda liberates us from this Ignorance. Thus when the Ignorance that causes practical experience of an individual experiencer and his means of knowledge has been destroyed by the knowledge arising from the Veda, all the means of valid cognition cease to be such any longer. And this means the realization of man's true end (S.V. 162, 10007).

Here we subjoin a few verses from the Vārtikas illustrating Suresvara's way of examining the valid means of knowledge.

(1) The means of valid knowledge do not produce 'unknowness' for the very reason that they produce 'knownness' if they produced 'unknonness', what function would valid knowledge fulfil? (B.B.V. I.iv.295).

(2) Our ignorance of anything is a matter of immediate awareness, and invariably *precedes* valid cognition and ceases with it. It cannot, therefore, be established by the means of valid cognition. (S.V.686).

(3) If ignorance of a thing were accessible to the means of knowledge, like objects such as a pot, it would be real, and what was at any time unknown would be unknown for ever. (S.V.687).

(4) We have already stated the rule which shows that erroneous cognition and doubt can no more be known through valid cognition than ignorance can. (The rule, namely, that *what is brought to an end* by a valid cognition cannot be *an object revealed by* that valid cognition). (B.B.V.I.iv.257).

(5) Pots and other objects in the world are known only through the valid means of empirical knowledge such as perception, etc. Until they are so known, they remain unknown. But the Self, because it is a self-evident reality, must become known without the help of an act of cognition. (S.V.10004)

(6) That (the Self) without taking cognisance of which even the empirical means of knowledge could not rightly determine the not-self-how can the ritualists deny that the Upanishads can communicate knowledge of it? (S.V. 551).

(7) Since every object is unknown before the idea of it first arises in our minds, and since (even as unknown), it exists by the power of the one reality (sat), it is that reality which is (ultimately) the thing that is unknown. The Self, which is the reality manifesting itself in both the knower and the means of knowledge when an empirical cognition is being sought, and which is revealed by its own power - that is (always) the entity concealed by Ignorance (N.S.II.7,8).

(8) In the case of the illusory cognition of silver in what is really a piece of shell, the valid means of knowledge expresses its validity by revealing the shell and showing that the latter existed before the means of cognition was applied. But no valid means of knowledge bears on the silver, which is not shown to have existed at all. When illusory silver is erroneously perceived in a piece of shell, there is no silver being revealed by valid cognition to exist in the same way that the shell does. There is no silver as a reality at all, either previously unknown, like the shell, or previously known (though imperfectly) like the Self, the real. (B.B.V. IV.iii. 166-7)

(9) The illusory silver is only known when the shell is not known. In the same way, the not-self can only be known when the Self, as immediate experience, is not known (in its true nature). Illusory silver cannot be the object of a valid cognition, as its existence, unlike that of the shell, cannot be established apart from the cognition by which it is known, since it is never established as known in other circumstances. Since the illusory silver-cognition does not reveal the shell as an object of valid cognition, it cannot be a means of valid cognition at all, for lack of an object. The illusory silver cognition cannot be a means of valid cognition for the shell any more than it can for silver, as it does not cancel Ignorance of the shell or assume its form. And it should be understood that, as in the case of the illusory silver-cognition, all apparent means of valid cognition that bear on the not self are not valid means of cognition at all from the standpoint of the highest truth). The only exception is that (i.e. the supreme metaphysical texts of the Veda) which bears on the inmost Self. A person's inmost Consciousness is experienced herein the world as unknown until he is enlightened by the (appropriate) means of knowledge (the supreme Vedic texts). (B.B.V. IV.iv.901-6)

(10) But where the cognition is (not of the not-self but) of the form and nature of the Self, being pure Consciousness excluding all else, there is no dependence on any further means of cognition. Once this knowledge rises, it never sets. (T.B.II.526).

(11) It is not the case (that if the Upanishads taught the sole reality of the transcendent Self the Vedic texts enjoing in rituals would be contradicted). All valid means of knowledge retain their validity till knowledge of the Self. For all culminate in, but end with, that. (S.V.162).

(12) The Ignorance that gives rise to the whole play of knower, knowledge and known is cancelled by enlightenment, which is of the nature of identity with the one infinite Self, arising from upanishadic texts like 'That thou art'. (S.V. 1006)

(13) Therefore the Veda is a valid means of knowledge in that it destroys Ignorance of the Self. And this is man's highest goal. Such is the view of the wise. (S.V.10007)

CANCELLATION OF ILLUSION

In the course of refuting the (Mimãmsaka) theory that perceptual errors arise from failure to perceive a distinction (akhyãtivãda), Ãcãrya Mandana goes onto state his own doctrine as follows:

> (1) There could not be the correcting-cognition 'this is not silver' if error had been mere non-apprehension, since nothing positive can result from a non-apprehension; a non-apprehension cannot give rise to any idea, as it is a non-existence. On the other hand a positive erroneous cognition 'revealing' silver, that did not in fact exist, in a nearby perceptible object, or a cognition 'revealing' (distance) silver as if it were close, would give a positive result (in the form of an idea subject to cancellation)... We do not hold that the correcting cognition 'this is not silver' merely negates the existence of silver or of an object in contact with the sense of sight. We hold that it either denies that the thing in contact with the sense of sight is silver, or else denies that it is silver that is in contact with the sense of sight. A non-apprehension cannot stand as the object of either of these negations, from the mere fact of being no more than a failure to apprehend. One must therefore necessarily resort to the theory of positive erroneous cognition (virprita-khyãti) if one is to account for the fact that there is anything positive to negate. (B.Sid. p.143)

And Mandana clearly says that the shell is the object of the erroneous silver-cognition.

(2) In erroneous cognition, it is not in its true form as shell that the shell stands as object of the silver-cognition, for the shell would prompt no activity in its true form. It stands in the form of silver, as there is an activity of picking up founded on that. (B. Sid. p. 147).

In Suresvara's Vārikta Ignorance is taken as a non-entity (abhāva). Nevertheless, the doctrine of erroneous perception positive erroneous cognition is clearly approved under a different form, as is shown at the beginning of the verse quoted above. 'The illusory silver is only known when the shell is not known...' (B.B.V. IV.iv.901, M.V.251,6).

No clear statement is forthcoming from Mandana on the question whether or not the illusory silver actually exists. But there are verses in the Vārtika clearly showing that the silver is a mere apparition which has no real existence anywhere.

(3) The notion 'this silver' does not refer to any real entity anywhere. It turns there was genuine knowledge of silver existing in the shell and that the silver was to a genuine 'this' (not a genuine object existing in front of us). Some say that, in the silver-illusion, because neither 'silver' nor 'this' (as associated with silver) can be shown to anywhere else they must exist in the Witness or in the mind. But his also we deny. There is no knowledge of any object at all here. There is a mere apparition caused by false knowledge. (B.B.V. I.iv.275-6).

The existence anywhere of a false notion or object cannot be proved by valid cognition. The illusory object, the illusory cognition, Ignorance itself, the individual experiencer and so on—all these are established not by valid means of cognition but by the immediate experience of changeless consciousness.

(4) Therefore an appearance like a memory arises in the mind that bears the impressions of previous experiences of silver. But it manifests only through the eternal, changeless

and unitary light of the supreme Self. In Ignorance there is only the individual experiencer and his experience—there is no real object of valid cognition beyond them. Hence Ignorance and its individual experiencer are objects of the immediate apprehension of the Witness. There could not even *be* an individual experiencer and his empirical experience without the support of pure consciousness (samvit). For, in their true nature, the individual knower and his knowledge and its objects, which together constitute the not-self, are nothing but pure Consciousness. (B.B.V. I.iv.279-82).

Thus for Suresvara the point of introducing the example of perceptual illusions like illusory silver was to show that the whole vision of the world was a mere illusion. The illusory appearance of the world rises up in the Self when the latter remains unknown. Even Ignorance cannot manifest except through the support of self-evident pure Consciousness. Such manifestation occurs in the absence of deep metaphysical reflection. On this point there are the following verses in the Vārtika.

(5) Therefore all our familiarity with valid empirical knowledge, with apparently valid empirical knowledge and with invalid knowledge (error) — as also with metaphysical Ignorance—is made possible by that special means of knowledge (the Self) which requires nothing else to illumine its object. This whole universe of objects that come into being and pass away can only be known through this special internal verifiable principle, which is self-evident and independent of any other means o knowledge. (B.B.V. I.iv.272-3)

The internal verifiable principle is the 'Self-not-yet-known'. 'Ananyamam' means 'self-established and independent of any other means of knowledge'.

(6) This erroneous cognition cannot be correct knowledge corresponding to any object, as it does not relate today object of valid cognition. Because it is known, it cannot said

not to exist at all. Because it is directly perceived as something actually present, it is not admitted to be a memory. (B.B.V. I.iv.274)

The erroneous cognition is not an idea corresponding to a real object, nor is it absence of knowledge, nor is it a memory. The teaching of this verse is like Sri Sankara's phrase 'the false appearance at one place of what had previously been seen at another place, of the nature of (but not identical with) memory' (B.S.Bh.II.i.1, intro..).

Authority of the Veda: Role of Negative Texts

In this way, because the Self has thus been shown to be the only entity that is unknown, it must undeniably be accepted as being the one thing that has to be known. Thus the Vedanta philosophy has a settled and well-demonstrated object of enquiry, while other philosophies do not. The fact that the Self as immediate experience is a verifiable reality is demonstrated by all the means of cognition. That very Consciousness which is accepted as the resultant-cognition following upon perception and the other valid means of knowledge being applied to external objects—that very Consciousness is accepted as the subject-matter of the Upanishads, which they communicate to the hearer with the authority of a valid means of knowledge.

It is for this reason that we do not accept the Vedic texts to be authoritative just because they are Vedic texts. They are accepted as authoritative because doubt and wrong knowledge and so forth are impossible in the Self as immediate experience, knowledge of which they effectively communicate. Since metaphysical Ignorance and its effects are only established 'through lack of deep metaphysical reflection', it can be removed solely by knowledge arising from the texts.

Nor should one raise the objection, 'Because the Self is of the nature of knowledge it can eliminate Ignorance on its own. What is the need of any further factor such as Vedic texts?' For what removes Ignorance? It is always a valid means of cognition, which provides a resultant-cognition which in turn removes the 'unknowns' of its object. But the Self is not contradictory to metaphysical Ignorance, for as constant and eternal awareness it remains impermanent co—existence with Ignorance. So what destroys metaphysical Ignorance-and it is the only thing that destroys it-is the Self when it has been immediately experienced in its true form through the Veda as means of cognition.

Nor should one think, 'The true nature of the Self has to be settled through logical argumentation, employing the method of agreement and difference. Why appeal to the Veda?' For it is only in relation to Ignorance that the Self appears to manifest as cause and effect. It true nature cannot be discovered in its manifestation either as effect or cause. So logical enquiry by the method of agreement and difference, which treats of effects and causes, will not awaken us to a knowledge of the true nature of the Self.

Again, the Self is the Absolute and the Absolute is the Self, their identity is the special theme of the upanishadic texts. That is not a subject that can be approached by any other means of knowledge apart from those texts. Nor should one raise the objection: 'If the meanings of the words "Absolute" and "Self" are within normal human comprehension it means that they must be known through some other means of knowledge apart from verbal revelation, and then verbal revelation could not be an authoritative means of knowledge-or else the meanings of the words must be beyond normal human comprehension, in which case the words "absolute" and "Self" would be ineffective for lack of any acquaintance with their meaning. In either case their meaning cannot constitute the theme of the upanishadic teaching'. Such an objection is not right. For infact the meaning of the word 'Self' is familiar as referring to the essence or true nature of anything, while the term Brahman (the Absolute) is familiar as expressing magnitude. A Vedic text can therefore very well employ those

words to communicate a meaning that transcends normal human comprehension, namely the identity of the Absolute and the Self. We have knowledge of the deities and heaven another supernatural matters through the texts of the Veda in just the same way.

In this connection we find texts like 'That thou art' and 'I am the Absolute' having pairs of words in subject-predicate relation. From this we conclude that the meanings of the words in each such pair stand as qualified and qualifier. By the process of qualification the element 'the sufferer' (the individual experiencer) is eliminated from the meaning of the word 'thou', and the element 'not directly known' is eliminated from the meaning of the word 'that'. Hence the properly prepared student acquires through these texts knowledge of the identity of the Self, indirectly indicated as the meaning of the word 'thous' through knowership and egohood (which point to the Consciousness of the hearer), with the Absolute, the indirectly indicated meaning of the word 'that'. This knowledge is immediate experience of that (transcendent principle) which is not the meaning of (i.e. which cannot be directly denoted by) any sentence; it is not communicated either by the exclusion or association of word-meanings to form a sentence-meaning. Here there is no need of the application of any further means of knowledge (once the text has been properly understood), since the reference is to Consciousness as the Real, and Consciousness in its true nature is super-terrestrial (alaukika), and Reality is of the nature of absolute awareness. There can only be dependence on knowledge from some other quarter or on something other than the Vedic text in a case where the thing to be known is within the scope of some other means of knowledge. In this connection, the following verses from the Brhadāranyaka Vārtika are relevant.

> (1) That which has ultimately to be known, which is initially unknown and which transcends the individual knower and his knowledge and its objects - that can be known in this world from the Veda and from no other source. (B.B.V. I.iv.339).
>
> (2) That which has to be known here, and known through the Upanishads as the means of valid cognition, is pure Consciousness, which manifests also as the resultant-cognition when the empirical means of cognition are applied to external objects. (S.V.159).
>
> (3) Nor do we maintain that the reason for faith in the Veda is its own statement that it is of superhuman origin (at Brhad. II. iv.10); the reason is the impossibility of the usual causes of invalidity of statements (human origin, which implies fallibility, being accessible to other means of knowledge, etc.) in the statements of Veda. (B.B.V. II.iv.325).
>
> (4) Metaphysical Ignorance and its effects cannot be proved to exist, either if take as identical wit the Absolute or as different. Hene we say that it is only established at all 'for lack of reflection'. The option that the ether of the sky is blue like a lotus-petal by day and then changes to become black like the belly of a bumble-bee at night is only accepted for lack of reflection. One should see that the whole notion of the existence of metaphysical Ignorance and its effects is an illusion of the same kind. (B.B.V, I.iv.332-3).

So we see that metaphysical Ignorance and its effects are indeterminable either as the real or as anything different, and they are established (accepted) only for lack of deep critical reflection.

> (5) Though enlightened by nature, the Self accepts and tolerates not being known, being the only entity able to do so, since it is the only entity that is real. It does not destroy Ignorance without the aid of a valid cognition. The Self destroys its own Ignorance only when mounted on the pedestal of a means of valid knowledge, and not otherwise. The means of valid knowledge destroys Ignorance, in alliance

with the Self, when it bears o nreality. (B.B.V. IV.iii.181-2)

The Self as immediate experience is not of itself in contradiction with metaphysical Ignorance. Nor is a mere means of valid cognition on its own able to contradict Ignorance, unless it is applied to its object and issues in a resultant-cognition (cp. M.V. 29,5). That is the meaning.

(6) Because cause and effect owe their origin to mere relative cognition, one cannot find reality in either of them. Hence reasoning by agreement and difference, which operates in the realm of cause and effect, cannot throw light on the reality taught in the Upanishads. The final reality can be known only through the upanishadic texts, the sole means for knowing it. (B.B.v. IV.iii. 400-1)

The Self is non-dual, so cause and effect are not real. Hence there cannot be knowledge of the Self through reasoning by the method of agreement and difference.

(7) The fact that the a true Self is identical with the Absolute and the Absolute identical with the true Self is the special topic of the metaphysical texts in the Upanishads like 'That thou art'; and it cannot be known through any other means of knowledge... The use of the work 'self' is current in the world and not restricted to that of the metaphysical term 'Self'. Equally, the idea of 'magnitude', conveyed by the term used for the Absolute (Brahman, from root brh, to swell), is familiar from current use. Thus the meanings of the individual words of the text 'I am the Absolute' are known from worldly experience. What, then is the obstacle to the formation of a sentence-meaning that transcends sense-experience from these words as juxtaposed in a sentence in the Veda? Even the meanings of such technical terms used by the ritualists as 'unprecedented' (i.e. the occult power of the ritual), 'deity' and 'heaven' are known from worldly experience. But in their case, too, a special meaning the transcends sense-experience is learn from the Vedic text. (B.B.V IV.iii.115, followed by S.V. 861-3)

(8) On our view, that which is not the direct meaning of any sentence (*viz.* the Self or Absolute, which cannot be directly denoted by any sentence), is known through immediate apprehension as the meaning of 'that' and 'thou' through the exclusion (of the mutually contradictory parts of the word-meanings) that arises through the words being placed in subject-predicate relation. It is the same process as that which occurs in the sentence 'Verily, the either in the pot is the same as the ether into sky'. (N. sid. III.9)

'The there in the pot is the same as the ether in the sky'. In this sentence the words 'pot-ether' and 'sky-ether' are placed in subject-predicate relation, so that their meanings qualify one another and the mutually contradictory elements are eliminated. The sentence-meaning that results is a reference by indirect indication to bare ether (not limited either as potother or sky-ether). the text 'That thou art' should be understood in the same way. 'Not the direct meaning of any sentence' means that what the sentence indirectly indicates is (something infinite and) not a sentence-meaning that arises from exclusion or association and so on (among the word-meanings in the manner of normal speech dealing with finite defects).

(9) the fact that the meaning of the word 'thou' is not the individual soul (lit. 'the sufferer') is conveyed by its being qualified as the Absolute, which is the meaning of the word 'that'; and the fact that the (transcendent) Absolute, the meaning of the word 'that', is intimately known as one's inmost Self is conveyed by the presence of the word 'thou' next to it. (N.Sid. III.10).

Because of the mutual qualification of the meanings, the contradictory elements are eliminated.

(10) The Consciousness and inferiority of the Self, raised

high above all change like a fixed mountain peak, are not accidental characteristics introduced from without. They are what enables the soul to feel itself as an individual experiencer and an ego. Therefore the Self is indirectly indicated by appeal (through the use of the word 'thou') to the soul's sense of being an individual experiencer and an ego. (N. Sid. III. 11)

Explanation of the Mechanism of the Negative Text Given in the Vārātika

Here we may take up the explanation given in the Vārtika of the meaning of the words in the ṇegative metaphysical texts of the Veda. Initially we have an account of a theme found in Sri Sankara's commentaries, the theme, namely, that all this realm of name, form and action will have to be negated. And this is followed by its actual negation through the word ';not' In this context, we should not suppose that once form, etc., have been negated of the Self they might persist elsewhere, as 'existence', for instance, when negated of 'pot' may persist in relation to 'cloth'. This agrees with worldly experience, too, where no form is found to subsist in separation from that of which it is a form. And when metaphysical Ignorance of the supreme Self has been negated, none of its effects and found to persist anywhere. Again, the things that have to be negated are not invariably present together with one another, whereas the presence of the inmost Self never fails. Hence it is first taught that all this world of name,form and action is erroneously superposed on the Self, and then its existence in the Absolute is denied, the Absolute itself being (unenviable because) self-established as immediate experience. The word 'not' can only negate what has to be negated on the basis of accepting the existence of the Self. For the Self as pure Consciousness is inseparable from any negation. All that has to be negated is dependent for its (apparent) existence on the Self, which cannot be negated. Negation, therefore, does not imply total non-existence of anything, as non-existence itself falls within

the realm of that which has to be negated. The upanishadic negation 'neither this nor that', however, extends universally, it negates whatever is found, except the Absolute or Self, the Witness of all, which latter persists untouched (B.B.V. II.iii/183-207).

But the text 'neither this nor that' is also explained by Suresvara in another way. On the second view, although this text has the form of a negation, it is not actually a negation. For before the occurrence of the text 'And so there is the teaching "neither this nor that"' (Brhad.II.iii.6), the Absolute had already been established as transcending the gross and subtle elements (the entire realm of the empirically knowable, cp. T.N. at M.V. 79,1). And in the text 'There are two forms of the Absolute' (Brahad.II.iii.1), the word 'of' implies that the Absolute is different from (transcends) the two forms. From the mere fact that the not-self is not regularly present together with the Self (e.g. in dreamless sleep), it on-existence in the Self has already been proved (so that the purpose of the text 'neither this nor that' cannot be a repeat that proof, which would amount to a mere tautology). And there are other reconsideration which show that the text 'neither this nor that' need not and should not be taken as a negation. There is a sense in which the not-self, since it is established by perception another means of valid cognition, cannot be negated. Even if we accept that in some sense it could be negated, a mere negation is the itself fruitless. If the text (Brhad.II.iii.6) were taken thus, it would not fulfill its promise of positive teaching (adesa), a formation of the Absolute. So the correct was to analyses the meaning of 'neti' (= na + iti) is to take 'na (not) as an indirect reference to self-established Self (as that in which the empirical knower, knowledge and known are not present, B.B.V, II.iii.229), and to take 'iti' as having the force of identifying the inmost Self with the Absolute (thereby bringing the Absolute within the scope for the possible experience of the hearer in the same way as 'That thou art', B.B.V.II.iii.233). This is Suresvara's teaching at Brhadaranyaka Vartika II.iii.214-34.

Here we quote a few more verses illustration go their points made in the Vārtika.

> (10) That the Absolute is different from the gross an subtle aspects of the world (the 'two forms') has already been established before the promise of positive teaching (adesa, Brhad. II.iii.6). Therefore this teaching is given to enable the hearer to have direct apprehension that he is the Absolute (B.B.V. II.iii.214).

The negative text 'neither this nor that' is not primarily concerned with negating what has to be negated (such as the gross and subtle aspects of the universe) but with an indirect method of communicating the true nature of the hearer. If the text merely negated the universe in its gross and subtle aspects, and the Absolute were not established by some other positive cognition, the result would be a void... (B.B.V. II.iii.215).

The element 'na' (not) in 'na + iti = neti' indicates indirectly that principle of Consciousness which is self established without need of a separate means of cognition, in which the individual knower, his knowledge and its objects do not exist, and which is known through awakening to one's own true nature .. (B.B.V.II.iii.229).

The word 'na' (not) indicates that which has ultimately to be known (the Self) is self-established by its own power. (it is that which is *not* known through the empirical processes). The word 'na' (not) is augmented by 'iti' (this) to form 'neti' to show that the Self is the Absolute. The Absolute is here indicated by the term 'iti' (because the term 'this' allied to not' negates the gross and subtle aspects of the world which appear to characterize the absolute, leaving the Absolute in its pure form identical with the Witness - so Anandagiri). (B.B.V. II.iii.233).

Here it might appear that an objection could be raised. If the two forms of the Absolute, the subtle and the gross aspects of the universe, are denied, why sould I that be thought to leave the

Absolute a void? The mere fact that it is beyond the scope of all other means of knowledge would not render it a void, since it self-revealed. Even though it is self-revealed, might we not wonder if the Vedic texts would not be needed to cancel metaphysical Ignorance? But the Vedic text 'neither this nor that', which negates all that is superimposed, exists precisely for this purpose.

But has not Ignorance been proved to be a distinct principle, the *cause* of what has been superimposed, so that it cannot be thus negated? No, we do not accept this. The method for expounding the Absolute is that of negating everything that has been imagined in regard to it. It is like communicating the true nature of the rope by negating the snake and all else that has imagined in it. Knowledge of the true nature of the Absolute arises simultaneously with the understanding the negations, so we cannot admit that anything further requires to be done for knowledge of the Absolute once the negations any understood. To us, therefore, it seems to be mere obstinacy to claim that there requires to be special further negation of Ignorance over and above negation of wrong knowledge.

Or again, we could happily concur with Ãnandagiri's gloss on Brhadaranyaka Vartika II.iii.233, when he says, 'the expression "neti" is the proof to show that the Witness, indicated by the word "not" (i.e. not the individual knower or any factor in the empirical personality), is the Absolute'. But enough of all these subtleties; All the various ways here discussed for accounting for the validity of the supreme negative texts follow the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction, and hence area acceptable.

Perception, etc., Cannot Contradict the Veda

We have already mentioned above (M.V. 105) that, like Mandana, Suresara refuted the notion of difference in order to answer the objection that the metaphysical texts of the Veda

could into be an authoritative means of knowledge since they stood n contradiction with other valid means of cognition that conveyed a knowledge of duality. Our own view is that Suresvara only raised this objection when arguing his position on the basis of deliberate concessions to the view of others. For elsewhere he refutes in clear terms the doctrine that the different means of knowledge could contradict one another (S.V. 1076-81; N.Sid. III.86). He also refutes the doctrine that the various means of knowledge could contradict one another on the topic of the unity and sole reality of the Self in the course of explaining Sri Sankara's Brhadaranyaka Commentary (B.B.V.II.i.588-94;cp N.Sid. III.96). *Such an author could not seriously admit that the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads could stand in contradiction with the deliverances of other means of knowledge. He also held that even the Veda was an authoritative means of knowledge of the Self only through negating Ignorance, not that it could communicate it directly. For, as reexplained at Sambandha Vartika 999, his view was that the existence of the individual experiencer and his knowledge and its objects, along with time and other conditions, depended entirely on the immediate experience supplied by the Self. How could any of them affect the Self in any way?

** (Cp. NSID. III.96, intro.: 'We speak thus (of the possibility of a conflict between Vedic revelation and perception) on the basis of a deliberate concession. Otherwise, we have more than once remarked that one means of cognition cannot be contradicted by another'. T.N.)*

Treatment of the Topic of Cause and Effect

As in Sankara's Brahma Sutra Commentary, so in Suresvara's Brhadaranyaka Vārtika, the subject cause and effect is intraduce only in order to refute the whole notion of cause and effect. There are places in the Vārtika where Suresvara appears to take Ignorance as the material cause of the world, but this is only a superficial view that might occur at first sight to one unable to give due consideration to what the Vārtikas and Naiskarmya Siddhi

really intended to say. No real existence of cause and effect is in fact admitted, as a study of certain parts of Suresvara's works would show. Indeed, he states it openly, and also refutes the whole conception of cause and effect.

> (1) And the whole uncritically accepted world of duality is *per se endless,* in that it rests on bare Ignorance of the non dual Self, as the fancied Silver rests on Ignorance of the shell . Hence it is Ignorance of the Self which is ultimately the cause of all evil. (N.Sid. I.1,intro.)

Here it might appear at first glance as though Ignorance of the Self were being taken as the material cause of duality. In reality, however, it is clear from an examination of such texts as 'Ignorance, which means "I not know"' (T.B.V.II.176, cp. M.V.110, 1;). 222.1. note that Ignorance is a nonentity (abhāva) and could not possibly be a material cause.

> (2) Further, the not-self is born of Ignorance. (N.Sid.III.1, intro., cp. M.V.113, 1).

Here again, one might make the mistake of supposing that it was being said that Ignorance was the material cause of the not-self. But infact the preceding sentence has clearly denied the existence of any Ignorance contradicting knowledge in the words, 'Nor is the attainment of knowledge possible in the not-self that one could argue that there must have been some contradictory Ignorance (in the not-self for such knowledge to negate', cp. M.V.113, 1).

> (3) For Ignorance is nothing but absence of knowledge, and, since the latter is a non-entity by nature, it cannot stand as the cause of transmigratory experience. The existent cannot spring from the non-existent. (N.Sid.III.7, intro.)

Here an objector suggests that ignorance cannot be the cause for transmigration.

> (4) Since every object is unknown before the idea of its arises in our minds, and since (even as unknown) it exists by the

power of the one reality (sat), it is that reality which is ultimately the thing that is unknown. (N. Sid. III.7, cp. M.V. 114, 7, *ad init.)*

This verse is composed to explain, against the previous objection, in which sense Ignorance is a cause, although it is a non-entity. The essence of the reply is that the objection is beside the point, because the actual cause is reality, the Absolute, as unknown. One should ignore the alternative explanation saying 'The Self is concealed by Ignorance as a positive force different from mere absence of knowledge' offered by the commentator jñā nottam because in contradicts Suresvara's meaning.

(5) Ignorance of the Self is the precondition for the appearance of this magic show of duality, and the Absolute is called the cause immediately through that. (B.B.V. I.iv.371).

Duality is here taken as a magic show in the sense of being an erroneous superimposition. Ignorance is its cause only in the manner above explained. The Absolute alone is the cause, through the medium of Ignorance; that is the meaning. One should recall here what has been said earlier about the sense in which Ignorance is the cause of erroneous knowledge (M.V. 111, 10; 112; 113, 2, note; 113,3). It is clear that the explanation of this verse given by Ānandagiri in his sub-commentary on this verse goes against the original meaning when he says, 'Duality, which, like a mass-hymnodist's magic show, is accepted as real only for lack of reflection, must have for its cause something which is not a non-entity (as a non-entity cannot function as a cause). It requires a material cause corresponding to itself (in reality-grade, i.e. indeterminable reality-grade) and has one is metaphysical Ignorance. The Absolute stands as a cause (only) through resorting to that'.

(6) Thus cause and other such notions are set out only for the sake of proving the existence of the transcendent Self. They are a device to make the Self available, as one who

knew the truth proclaimed (G.K. III.15, cp. M.V.33,3; 75,10). The negation of all notions such as cause does not suffice to establish non-duality. The negation itself requires to be negated by the awakening to the homogeneous unity and sole reality of the Self. First there is a thorough demonstration that all this appearance of plurality has Being for its true nature. Then it is taught how Being itself melts into infinity as pre Consciousness. (B.B.V. I.ii.27-9)

Cause and effect and so forth are only established provisionally with a view to establish the unborn non-dual self, which is neither cause nor effect nor absence of cause and effect. It is not intended to establish cause and effect as real from the highest point of view. No is it intended to say that non-duality is simply the absence of cause and effect. For one becomes awake to the self-revealed principle which is different from any non-entity through negating negation itself, by awakening to the self-established reality that is its opposite. First it is shown, by resorting to the hypothesis of causation, that the real (sat) is the cause of all. Then even the notion of reality (sattva) is eliminated in the non-dual homogeneous principle. So the teaching about cause and effect is not for the purpose of affirming the existence of cause and effect.

(7) Ignorance, merit and demerit and the impressions of past actions lying unevolved in the elements fire, water, earth and wind, and dissolved in ether, remaining as existent but not manifest - these, together with the Self, form 'The Undeveloped Principle'.... It is Ignorance that manifests in the form of the objective universe of material objects (visva), as it is the nature of Ignorance to do so. Hence the Upanishad says, 'This universe as then (before the projection of the world) undifferentiated (Brhad.I.iv.7). (B.B.V. I.iv.205-7)

First the nature of 'the Undeveloped' is explained. Then it is declared that it is Ignorance only that appears as the manifest

and the unmanifest. Hence it is that the Undeveloped Principle in sometimes called Ignorance in the ancient texts and, when the word Ignorance is used in this special sense, material causality can be found attributed to 'Ignorance'. The notself, too, is another form assumed by Ignorance. But here the clue is given by the phrase 'Hence it (not-self) is also called Ignorance (T.B.V. II.178, M.V.251,6). This also is only a metaphorical use of the term Ignorance.

(8) If viewed from the standpoint of the final truth, Ignorance and its effects cannot be established as existing either through its sown power or through that of another. From the standpoint of Ignorance it is sometimes referred to by the term 'the Undeveloped'. When we reflected on our experience on waking from dreamless sleep we say 'I knew nothing', which shows that Consciousness is reflected in Ignorance. The origin, maintenance and dissolution of the world take place in the Self as reflected in Ignorance. The Self, as associated with Ignorance, is the cause of bodies where Ignorance predominates, and of conscious being where Consciousness predominates. All such distinctions are conditioned by past thought, meditation and activity (B.B.V. I.iv.340-2).

(9) Ignorance is confusion and unconsciousness appearing in the reality, the self, which is in truth ever enlightened. As confusion and unconsciousness are found in the not-self, this whole world is called 'death'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.457).

The text (at Brhad.IV.iii.7) as spoken of 'the forms of death', where 'death' means 'Ignorance'. Earlier it had said, 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death' (Brhad.I.iii.28). Suresvara's present verse follows on from that. Confusion and unconsciousness are the nature of Ignorance. And the fact that both of these appear even in the not-self is an expression of 'death'.the verse explains how the term 'Ignorance' come to be applied to the not-self.

(10) The term 'Ignorance' does not mean anything but 'non-

consciousness'. This is confirmed by the Veda (at Brhad.IV.iv.3 and 4) where the text runs 'having sent this body to 'Avidya' (= unconsciousness)'. (B.B.V. I.iv.256).

In this verse Suresvara declares that on-consciousness is the essential nature of Ignorance in order to bring out how enlightenment and Ignorance are contradictors as Consciousness and non-consciousness. His idea is that the Veda intended to teach that Ignorance was non-consciousness when it said, 'Having struck down its previous body and sent it to unconsciousness, the soul proceeds (after death) to a new body'. Here again, Ignorance is clearly identified with the not-self.

(11) Texts like 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death (light is immortal)' (Brhad..I.iii.28) and 'In the beginning, this universe was water' Brhad.V.v.1) show that metaphysical Ignorance is continually at work, either in manifest or unmanifest form. (B.B.V. I.ii.136).

The text 'Darkness is death, light is immortal' (Brhad.I.iii.28) refers to Ignorance, evolved and manifest as natural knowledge and action. In the text 'In the beginning, this universe was water' (Brhad.V.v.1), the word 'water' also refers to Ignorance, but this time the reference is to Ignorance in its unmanifest form. That is the meaning of the verse.

One cannot here accept the statement of Ãnandagiri, 'It is Root Ignorance only that is referred to by the word "darkness" used to explain the term "death"'. For it is said that Ignorance displays itself either in manifest or in unmanifesst form. This implies that Root Ignorance, identified with the Unmanifest Principle, is itself a creation of Ignorance. And the doctrine of Root Ignorance as accepted by other schools of Ãdvaita is nowhere found in the Vãrikta.

The word 'Root' in the phrase 'Root Ignorance displays itself' must have entered the received text through a mishearing on the part of someone in error, who was evidently introducing his own peculiar theory, paying no attention to the loud and clear state-

ments elsewhere that Root Ignorance was but a particular form assumed by Ignorance, namely the Unmanifest Principle. Neither was any attention paid to the description of Ignorance given in the words 'Ignorance is the feeling "I do not know"' (cp. T.B.V. II.176).

We may pass this by as incidental. But the following should here be noted. Wherever in the Vārtika there is a reference to Ignorance as a material cause, this is predicated of Ignorance considered as having assumed its form as the non-conscious Unmanifest Principle. It is not a reference to it in its own characteristic nature as confusion. For the whole conception of cause and effect is only mentioned in the Vārikta at all to show that its is created by Ignorance. From the standpoint of practical experience, on the other hand, causality can be accepted where ever it is found.

> (12) Ths illusion (māyā) which, though utterly real, manifests as name, form and action - its subtlest form is called 'Death'. (B.B.V. I.iv.135).

Ignorance displays itself here in the world as name, a form and action. Its subtlest form, which may also be called Māyā, is called 'Death'. It had been said earlier in the Vedic passage under comment, 'This was covered over by Death' (Brhad.,I.ii.1). Here again, it is only Ignorance in its form as seed-state of the not-self consisting of name, form and action that is referred to by the word 'Māyā'. And this agrees with numerous texts in Sri Sankara's commentaries, such as 'Name and form, imagined through Ignorance as if they were the very nature of the omniscient Lord, indeterminable either as the real principle or as anything different from it, the seed of transmigratory experience and the differentiated world, are spoken of in the Veda and Smrti as "The Power of Māyā belonging to the Omniscient Lord"' (B.S.Bh.II.i.14, cp. M.V.45, 1). Anandagiri's remark in his subcommentary here, 'The word Māāy is introduced to refute those who distinguish between Ignorance and Māyā', was made without a proper understanding of the meaning of the verse on which he was commenting.

> (13) In this context (of teaching that the world-appearance arises from absence of knowledge of the Absolute) we find the clear verse of Gaudapāda, which begins, well supported by analogies, 'As a rope imperfectly perceived... (in the dark is variously imagined as a snake or a stream of water or in other ways, so is the Self wrongly imagined as this and that' (G.K. II.17, cp. M.V.23). That which as no name or form manifested (at the beginning of the world-period) through bare Ignorance. (B.B.V. I.iv.389-90).

What the author is saying is: 'One the topic of manifestation proceeding from the Undeveloped Principle, one should see from the explanation of creation given by Gaudapada, with examples, that the notion of the world and the Absolute as effect and cause must be interpreted as agreeing in every way with the analogy of the illusory snake misperceived in the rope'. In the same way, the author later (B.B.V. I.iv.443) quotes Bhagavatpāda Sankara's Upadesa Sāhasri XVIII.46: 'Just as the rope-snake, (though unreal), possesses being by virtue of the rope until discriminated from it, so also does the complex of the Self, the reflecting medium and the reflection possess being by virtue of the changeless Self, (until it is discriminated from it', cp. M.v. 144, 10).

> (14) Transmigratory experience is taught to be an erroneous superimposition on the Self. And, according to the general worldly view , there cannot be erroneous superimposition without a cause. Therefore, to explain what is the cause, Sri Sankara says in his brhadaranyaka Commentary 'That (Self) which is the cause of the whole universe..' But has not the cause already been declared to have been the superimposition on the Self, through natural Ignorance, of the notions of being one who acts, along with action and its results? Yes. But the teaching is repeated in a special form intended to refute the Sankhya doctrine that Nature (non-conscious and

> independent of Spirit) is the material cause of the world. The cause of the world is the Self, unknown through Ignorance. It is not the three 'constituents' (guna) making up Nature spoken of by the Sankhyas (B.B.V. I.iv.478-80)

This is an explanation of the passage in Sri Sankara's Commentary on the Brhadāranyaka (I.iv. 7 ad init.) which begins, 'This Self, for the sake of which all the traditional texts came into being, on which the notion of being one who acts, along with that of action and its results, are superimposed through natural Ignorance, that which is the cause of the whole world, that which is the true nature of name any form...'. There is mention here of transmigration, consisting of the feeling that one is acting, a and associated with action and its results, as being 'superimposition'. The word 'superimposition' is used here to mean the result of superimposition, not the act, according to the interpretation 'A superimposition is what is superimposed'. The reference (in Suresvara's verses) to (the worldly view that there must be) a cause of superimposition refers to the real substratum on which an imagined entity must rest.

Suresvara takes the phrase 'through Ignorance' from Sri Sankara's Commentary, interprets it according to his own system as meaning absence of knowledge, and then refers to the objection that might be raised, 'There cannot be superimposition without a (positive) cause'. On his own view, the statement 'Absence of knowledge is the cause of all the world' does not refer to absence of knowledge alone as the independent cause. The cause is the Self as unknown. This, at least, is my own understanding of the verses. And then the reply comes, saying that there was no occasion for the objection that was raised.

On the system of the revered Commentator himself, there is no problem about the falsity of transmigration, consisting in the feeling that one is acting, associated with action and its results. For he says, 'Transmigration is set up through natural Ignorance in the form of erroneous knowledge'. Where he said, 'That Self which is the cause of all the universe', that was only to show that because the whole universe is merely imagined, the Absolute can only be the cause in the sense of being the real substratum on which the imaginations are made. There is to this extent a difference between the explanations of Ignorance offered by Sri Sankara and Suresvara. The two explanations agree basically, however, as we have already explained at M.V.112.

> (15) If the effect were taken as different from the cause, how could they because and effect? They would be known as separate, unconnected entities, like the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains. But if the effect were taken as non-different, then, since there would be identity, there could not because and effect. What is actionless cannot function as a cause. That which is not the object of action should not be called an effect. And that which is void of action cannot be a factor of action. Time and action could not be causes, as they themselves only exist through that (the Self) in which they are due to dissolve. It is evident that what cannot even bring itself into being could not bring anything else into being, whatever its efforts. (B.B.V. II.i.399-402).

Here the whole conception of causally is rejected as rationally indefensible. A few verses later Suesvara sums up. 'And so the creations and withdrawals of the universe down the ages are imagined, just as the distinctions of time and space are. When you have seen reality, you know that the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe are impossible' (B.B.V.. II.i.411, M.v. 129,8). And so Sresvara keeps to that tradition of the true experts in Vedanta, which says that the causality supposed to produce the world is illusory.

The Treatment of Universal and Particular

Thus the treatment of cause and effect in Suresvara's works is not introduced to show that the Absolute is the cause of the world. Its purpose is actually to refute the whole conception of

causality by first superimposing the notion of causality onto the Self in order to teach and existence of the latter (the Self, read atmano 'stitvam), and then refuting causality in the light of the Self in its true nature. The case with the teaching of universal and particular is similar. The first step is to teach the existence of the Self by superimposing onto it the notion that it is a universal, in order, in the end, to be able to deny that it is characterizable either as a universal or as a particular. Here too, Suresvara follows the method of the revered Commentator. Indeed, in the preliminary false attribution of the notions of universal and particular, he follows the method of the Upanishad itself, as we can now see.

As the particular beats in a drum-roll cannot be heard separately from the drum-roll itself, even so the things whose existence depends on the Self cannot be perceived separately from he Self (B.B.V. II.iv.267-8, condensed). Fist one has the general perception, 'Those are the sounds of a drum', or one may hear them in a more specific, but still general, form as 'Those sounds arise from the striking of a drum in a special way'. But any relatively specific sounds, or particular sounds, are only heard as part of their universal, the general drum-roll (cp. B.B.V. II.iv.275-80). Again, first one has the general indeterminate perception 'pot', after that the specification 'is', yielding 'existent pot'. And so the original general perception is further specified inexperience by sub general perception is further specified in experience by subsequent particularization (having a long spout, existing at such and such a place and time, etc.: B.B.V. II.iv.281). Again, each further specification in our knowledge of a universal and to the accompaniment of it. And, in the same way, every genus or particular is itself known as accompanied by Consciousness (cit) imperfectly known. It is superimposed on the Self through absence of knowledge of the latter. But the inmost Self does not require any external support to establish its own existence. The Self beholds the not-self only when its puts on the livery of being an individual experience. But it experiences itself as independent Consciousness in its true state only. Examples such as the sounds of the conch and lute are also given to illustrate the dissolution of all particulars everywhere into the one great universal, 'Being'.

And yet one must remember that in reality no distinction into universal and particular exists. For though the universal is invariably found in the particulars, the particulars are not invariably found in the universal. But the universal cannot be perceived separately and without being in some way related to the particulars. Even if one admitted that universal somehow existed in isolation from particulars, they would then become particulars themselves, like 'that particular short-horned cow' within the general species cow. And if one cannot establish the existence of universals one cannot establish the existence of particulars either. When one cannot establish the existence of either universals or particulars, it is vain to talk about a particular falling within a universal. For the relation of container and contained implies two terms. And no relation of distinction or of any other kind can be established as holding between universal and particular. This is the line taken by Suresvara in his retraction. In this connection the following verses are worthy of note.

> (1) The sound of the drum in general is mentioned to exemplify the broad universal as such. The 'drum-roll' refers to the particulars conceived as the universal in its other (i.e. particularized) form. And the reference to 'external sounds' (Brhad.II.iv.7) refers to the (impossibility of hearing the) particulars alone (conceived as somehow *separate from the universal). These are the three examples that the Upanishad gives (to show that sound in a particular form is dependent on sound in a more general form both to exist and to be known, so that particular Being, also, depends on more general Being both to exist and to be known). (B.B.v. II.iv.288-9)*
>
> (2) Nothing whatever can be established by the means of

valid cognition independently of the notion of Being, whether regarded as the same as Being through invariable concomitance, or as different from it through independence, or as of the nature of non-being. Because there cannot be anything separate from Being, there cannot be anything in relation with doing. And one should understand that, whatever is the case with Being, exactly the same is the case with the inmost Self, the reality of which is self-revealed, and does not have to be established by any separate means of cognition. (B.B.V. II.iv.290-1)

No reality separate from Being conceived as a universal can be established either as in constant concomitance with Being or as independent of Being, or as non-being. This is what the example of Being conceived as the highest universal shows. So the point is proved by the example of Being conceived as the highest universal that there cannot be any relation of Being with anything else taken as separate. The meaning is that the same non-duality obtains inter case of the self-revealed Self (which is not, from the highest standpoint, a universal).

(3) The pot is perceived as existent, as having a long spout, as situated at a certain place, as existing at a certain time. No new object is perceived each time there is a further determination. (B.B.V.II.iv.281).

This is an example to show how all the later determination are contained implicitly in the first indeterminate perception.

(4) In the same way, everything that is perceived is superimposed on pure Consciousness, as it is invariably perceived accompanied by that. Everything in the world, whether a universal or a particular, has Ignorance of pure Consciousness as its cause. (B.B.V. II.iv.282).

(5) There is no other source for the establishment of the inmost Self apart from the (self-revealed) inmost Self itself. In the case of the not-self, means of valid cognition are required. Even then, the not-self is only known through the individual knower, who depends for his own existence on the Self. (B.B.v. II.iv.283, with gloss).

The inmost Self is its own means of valid cognition. The not self is only established at all through the Self as means of cognition.

(6) The Self can only behold the not-self when it does the livery of an individual able act and experience. As pure Vision raised above change, it does not behold itself in the same way. The not-self, being complex, is known through perception. The Self, being simple, is known through itself in the form of knowledge bearing inwards. (B.B.V. II.iv.284-5).

The Self as an individual capable of action knows the not-self through applying one of the means of valid cognition. The Self in its true transcendence knows itself in immediate experience without recourse to any external means. Moreover, the not-self as known by the individual knower through his means of knowledge is a complex entity. But the Self does not enter into composition with any other being. It is known through its own Self in the form of knowledge bearing inwards.

(7) (The whole conception of universal and particulars is unintelligible.) The universal can no more be identical with the particulars than they can with it. But if the universal be taken as distinct from the particulars there can be no universal (and hence no particulars either). It a universal were taken *per impossible* as not being in constant a concomitance with its particulars (and so as not being identical with them), the universal and its particulars would be distinct, like an elephant and a rat. But then what we call a universal would be a particular among particulars, like a short-horned cow in a herd of others (B.B.V. II.iv. 269-70, cp. M.V.130,3)

'Among particulars' - that is, it would either be a particular

sub-species among species, or a particular among particulars.

The treatment of the Discrimination of the Five Sheaths

The view of Suresvara expressed in his Vārtika is that the teaching about the Five Sheaths (cp. M.v. 39), too, is introduced in the Upanishads in order to bring out the nature of the Self as the Absolute by first attributing to it possession of the Five Sheaths, but only with a view to denying them afterwards. This method of teaching may be briefly summarized as follows.

The notion that we are in deitical with the sheats is implanted in us by an impressions arising from beginningless Ignorance. In Vedanta, the sheaths are initially accepted as a device through which to introduce the idea of the inmost Self existing within them (T.B.V. II.232-3). The inmost Self, though only one, appears through Ignorance as if limited by the Five sheaths in two ways, tht is, on the individual plans and on the cosmic plane (T.B.V.. II.234-5). The sheaths, beginning with the sheath made up of food (the physical body) are effects. They each have to be first dissolved into their material causes, food and so on. Then each earlier one in turn has to be dissolved into the next in the series, until the Self is left as the supreme cause, and then even the notion that it is a cause is cancelled by the knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts, and it finally remains over as the Absolute in its true form (T.B.V. 236-7).

(First one must meditate one one's own individual body as being nothing over and above 'food', the matter of the cosmos, until it is finally felt to be so (T.B.V II.253). The none must meditate one's own vital energy till it is felt to be one with the cosmic vital energy (T.B.V, II.254), on one's mind (manas, M.v.25,8) as to cosmic mind (expressed as the Veda, T.B.V.II.306), on one's intellect (buddhi, M.V.25,8) as the cosmic intellect (hiranyagarbha, the one who 'has' and realizes the ideas in the cosmic mind, T.B.V. II.306 f.), and on the joy arising from the merit of one's rituals and prescribed meditations (T.B.V. II.320-22; 342-5) as constituting a sheath of the Absolute (the anandamaya-kosa) which is a false appearance of the Absolute (T.B.V. II.340-2), though its true nature is nothing other than the Absolute (T.B.V. II.341). T.N.)

If (no account were taken of the cosmic plane and) only the sheaths of the individual plane were dissolved, the result would be the knowledge of a 'self' individualized by its own body and mind, in the manner of the Sānkhya teaching (T.B.V. II.268). Each later sheath that is mentioned in the series is spoken of as something separate from the earlier ones. It is regarded as 'another internal self' according to the formula 'it (the preceding self) is filled by that (the later one)'. As the series progresses, each sheath is said to be filled by the next one following it, which constitutes its true 'self'. So we see that the sheath made up of food is accompanies by the remaining four, beginning with the sheath made up of the vital energy. The sheath made up of the vital energy is accompanied by the remaining three, beginning with the sheath made up of mind (i.e. the sheaths made up of mind, intellect and bliss). On this basis, all effects have to be dissolved in the supreme cause by not noting that the later sheaths are in constant concomitance with the earlier ones of the series, while the earlier ones are not inconstant concomitance with the later ones (T.B.V. II.269).

The reality that has to be communicated by this device is the Absolute. It is taught in the second Section of the Taittiriya Upanishad (the Ananda or Brahmananda Valli). And the third Section (Bhrgu Valli) explains how the existence and nature of the Absolute has earlier been taught by pointing to the mutual concomitance and non-concomitance amongst the various sheaths, so that the two Sections agree. There is only this small difference that in the third Section the Absolute is taught as being pure Bliss in its true nature through the negation of the Five Sheaths which are effects of Ignorance, as is implicit in the text 'He had the knowledge "The Absolute is bliss"' (Taitt.III.6). (See

T.B.V. II.332-5).

And, in the same way, the meaning of the text 'A person becomes non-existence (if he thinks the Absolute to be non-existence)' (Taitt.II.6) is found to be the same. For it says that if a man thinks of the Absolute, which is in fact real as his own Self, as being one of the sheaths and therefore unreal, he becomes himself unreal. The knowers of the Absolute hold that he alone is real who knows himself as the real Absolute, beyond the sheaths. Therefore one should negate all the sheaths, which have been imagined through Ignorance and realize that one is the supreme Self, not subject to change (T.B.V. II.353-6).

In this context, these are the verses of the Taittiriya Vartika most worthy of Consideration.

> (1) The mind has become deeply impregnated with impressions in this beginning less realm of transmigration. It can, however, be turned towards the inmost Self by a device, and so this device is now set forth. In truth, the one inmost Self has no contact with duality. It only undergoes bifurcation into inner and outer, subject and object, by way of illusion through Ignorance. On the subjective side, there are the five sheaths beginning with the sheath made up of food (the physical body), along with the inmost Self; on the objective side, there are food and the remaining material causes of the five sheaths (i.e. earth, water, fire, air and ether).

Having dissolved the five individual sheaths into their cosmic counterparts by meditation, one should meditate on the five cosmic counterparts of the five sheaths, taking each succeeding one as the inner 'self' of its predecessor. Having thus dissolved the whole notion that one is in any sense an effect, one should rest in the notion that one is the cause. And then finally one should dissolve that notion through the supreme Vedic texts, and attain to the Absolute as one's real Self. (T.B.V. II.233-7).

(2) Though the Self cannot be identical with the Five Sheaths,

it appears to be so through Ignorance, as the rope-snake appears to be identical with the rope. And it appears to suffer in tune with the sheaths. (T.B.V. II.250).

> (3) As each effect in turn is of the nature of its material cause, the Absolute is infinite, and the Sankhya dualism between Nature and Spirit is avoided. Each material cause in the series exists independently of its effect, which precedes it in the series (as the cosmic vital energy exists independently of food and is the source from which food proceeds). And yet it invariably accompanies its effect. Hence our thesis that the effect is nothing over and above the material cause can be supported by arguing from independent existence and invariable concomitance (vyatireka and anvaya) ... all four of the other (and higher) sheaths are present in the sheath made up of food. The three other higher ones are present in the vital energy, two in the mind (intellect and bliss), one (bliss) in the intellect. (T.B.V. II.268-9, 271).

> (4) The Absolute was taught in the second Section of the Taittiriya Upanishad. To explain the method how it has to be learned, the third Section of the Upanishad recounts (Taitt. III.1, etc.) how Bhrgu said to Varuna, 'Holy one! Teach me Brahman! When the goal has first been explained, it then remains to explain the means. The means are the Five Sheaths, for one reaches the Absolute through (meditating on) them (as taught). It is clear that they are the means, because the Self is seen through them when they are analyzed and meditated on according to the laws of universal concomitance (anvaya) and independent existence (vyatireka). (T.B.V. II.333-5).

After explaining Sri Sankara's interpretation of the word 'tapas' (austerity) given in his commentary on Taittiriya III.1, Suresvara adds his own, which runs: 'Tapas is pondering according to the laws of constant concomitance and independent existence;'

(T.B.V. III.19). The present passage should be understood in the light of that.

(5) If a person identifying himself with the sheaths, thinks that the Absolute is unreal, although in fact it is real as his own Self, he himself becomes unreal in this world...This being so, one should rise above the sheaths that have been imagined through Ignorance. One should take refuge in the supreme Self, beginningless, endless and not subject to modification. (T.B.V. II.353, 356).

121 The Distinction Between Subject and Object

The Self in its true nature as seen from the standpoint of the highest truth is also taught by the method of first falsely attributing to it the character of an individual experiencing subject and then retracting the teaching. For example, we find the pure Consciousness that constitutes the true nature of the Self figuratively referred to at various places in the Upanishadsas the perception of the individual and as the individual perceiver. This Consciousness, which in its true nature is one, appears as many through Ignorance. And then Consciousness in its true form as one is contrasted with the empirical consciousness arising in the course of the activity of the individual experiencer; ;and in this form it is referred to as Consciousness 'in its true nature' to ensure the contrast.

Empirical consciousness comes into being and suffers the six changes of state (coming onto being, existence, growth, development, decline, destruction) undergone by everything in the temporal realm. But it is pervaded at every stage by unchanging pure Consciousness in its true form. We have the upanishadic text, too, 'The Absolute which is directly and immediately evident is the Self, present within all' (Brhad. III.iv.2). The word 'directly' (evident) might suggest that it was the individual subject which was being referred to. So the words 'and immediately' are added to set at rest any suspicion that the reference was to perceptual knowledge arising from the division into knower, knowledge and known. The details are given at Brhadaranyaka Vārtika III.iv.15-18 (see M.V.121,5 below).

Consciousness in its true nature only exists where the division into knower, knowledge and known has been transcended. The sequel to the passage 'You cannot see the seer of seeing' (Brhad.III.iv.2) shows that the Self is the Witness of the complex formed by the individual knower with his knowledge and its objects. It is not itself an object of cognition, and we know from the very fact of its being the real in its true nature (which transcends all distinctions, including that into subject and object). Thus it is said that the Self cannot be an object of empirical perception. There exists a Witness in the light of which alone the experience 'I see' and 'I do not see' is possible. That Witness must be indetified with pure Consciousness. It can only be known through its own light. It cannot become the object of empirical perception. The individual knower and his knowledge and its objects are non-conscious by nature. Being a complex, they exist for the sake of another a (cp. U.S. (prose) section 56). They cannot provide knowledge of the vision of the inmost Witness. They cannot even know each other unaided. They depend on the consciousness of the Witness to establish themselves at all. How could they possibly see the seer of all?

On this subject,one should consider the following verses.

(1) That Seer (the Witness) is itself the sight. It is not one of a complex of actors in an action. For sight is here claimed as a characteristic of the Seer. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1435)

On account of the attribution of seeing to the Seer as an essential property (not as a mere temporary activity) in the upanishadic phrase '(There is no break in) the seeing of the Seer' we understand that seeing is to be taken as the essential nature of the Seer. So the Self is not an agent carrying out an act of seeing.

(2) Consciousness is one only every where. It is different from all the not-self. This one Consciousness undergoes illusory manifestation in many different forms through causes arising from Ignorance of it. (B.B.V. III.vii.60).

(3) Consciousness, which is action less, assumes this familiar form of empirical knowledge, divided into individual subject, act of knowing and object. But Consciousness itself is without this division. Because it is one and the sole reality, the familiar empirical form only arises as an appearance, ever pervaded by Consciousness in its true form. It is only when pervader and pervaded are exhausted in that relation that we have pervasion in the true sense, as in the case of the pervasion of the rope-snake by the rope. There cannot be pervasion in the full sense between things that are differentiated by space or time, like the Himalayan and Vindhya ranges. (B.B.V. III.iv.96-8)

Because vision, as an action explicable through the factors of action, is invariably accompanied by Consciousness in the true sense, which is not a factor in any action, we say that empirical vision arises 'pervaded by' pure Consciousness, and this implies that it is pervaded by it in the same sense that a rope-snake is pervaded by the rope. This alone is pervasion in the strict sense. When we say, for instance, that the pot is 'pervaded' (encompassed) by the light of a Lamp, that is loose usage.

(4) This empirical vision on the part of the Self depends on the individual expereincer and other illusory factors. But know that the Consciousness of the inmost Self is real in the highest sense. It is only through the presence of real Consciousness, and pervaded by it, that the empirical vision en joyed by the Self comes and goes and suffers the six stages of development typical of all temporal being (coming into being, etc., cp. above, M.V. p.344). The limitations thereby imposed on the universal Consciousness are but apparent

limitations, like the apparent limitations in space introduced by the production of apot (cp. M.V. 27,1) (B.B.V. III.iv.99-100).

(5) And in case the characterization 'directly evident' suggests an active seer, the phrase 'immediately evident' is added to prevent this supposition (Brah.III.iv.1)... The phrase 'immediately evident' (aparoksad) is used to negate the distinction into individual subject, known object, and knowledge, and to convey a reality that is without distinctions. When the distinction itno subject, object and knowledge is negated, the self-revealed Witness alone remains over as established, revealed by the characterization 'immediately evident'. (B.B.V. III.IV.15,17-8).

(6) It is said (by the revered Commentator) that, since the individual subject and his knowledge and its object only exist relatively to one another, it is the true and eternal nature of the Self to be the Witness... If, with that vision whereby you are able to say 'I know' and 'I donot know' you are able to turn round and see that very vision itself (as if it were an object) - then please speak out (and luck to you!)... Those who say that, when the Witness of all the modifications of the mind is established as self-revealed experience, there still remains something to be brought about by action, will have the difficulty of explaining with what instruments the Witness could perform in action. B.B.v. III.iv.82; 80; I.iv.320.

The operation of the valid means of cognition depends on the prior establishment of the Consciousness that is Witness of all. This, being self-revealed, does not depend on anything else. No contribution to that which is the Witness by nature can be given for activities appropriate to that which is merely the known. As the power of a lamp to shed light cannot be increased byanyother Lamp, so the lamp of immediate experience is incapable of being increased by any other immediate experience. This being the case, those who say that a immediate experience

is something that has to be brought about by action will have the difficult task of explaining how, with what instruments, and for what end, immediate experience could be produced. That is the meaning.

What has been said so far has been said from the standpoint so of false attribution. Now we begin the corresponding retraction. The Self's unconditioned Vision stands prior to all activity either of seeing or of any other kind. It is not subject to increase or diminution. It is not a factor in any action. It is the Self in its true form. It becomes a Witness only through association with metaphysical Ignorance. And the very notion of association with Ignorance is itself a creation of Ignorance. In its true nature, the unconditioned Vision raised above all change can no more be a Witness than the non-conscious can. Pure consciousness cannot be a Witness for lack of a connection with any object capable of being witnessed, while the non-conscious cannot be a Witness even when a connection with such objects exists. The supreme Self as Consciousness is therefore only a Witness through the medium of its reflection in Ignorance. On this view, all difficulties can be solved.

> (7) The inmost Consciousness has stood eternally without ever rising or setting, the prior condition for the possibility of the activity of an individual expereincer, itself not a factor in any action, transcendent (relationless). This is the true form of the Self, not of the nature either of a cause or of an effect, eternally manifest, homogeneous, void of all darkness and all distinctions. It assumes the form of a Witness only through connection with metaphysical Ignorance. And the notion of connection with Ignorance is itself due only to Ignorance. (B.B.V. III.iv.83-5).

> (8) The unconditioned vision raised above all change can no more be a Witness than what is non-conscious can. The unconditioned Vision has no connection with any object capable of being witnessed: the non-conscious is not capable of being witness even when such an object is at hand. Therefore the supreme becomes a Witness of its own reflection in Ignorance (in the form of the individual knower, knowledge and known). For the reflection of Consciousness in Ignorance (is an object capable of being witnessed, since it) is a compound implying relationship between effect and cause. (B.B.V. III.iv.89-90).

'Effect' here means the intellect and so on/. 'Cause' means consciousness as unknown.

(Whatever is compounded (samhata) has been brought into being by another and exists for the sake of another and is therefore an object capable of being witnessed. On 'compounded' in this sense, cp. U.S. (prose) section 56. T.N.)

> (9) The Self has no second thing over against it, as it is raised above all change and has only Ignorance for its apparent conditioning adjunct. Nevertheless, the false idea that it is a Witness is superimposed upon it by dense souls whose minds have been blinded by Ignorance. (B.B.V. I.iv.372).

The notion that it is a Witness is a false superimposition, conditioned by the limiting adjunct of bare Ignorance.

> (10) The individual knower, stationed in the intellect and identified with it, convinces himself of the presence of Ignorance and its effects in the Self, though in truth it is not present, through his own extroverted gaze - as simple souls attribute blue colour to the colourless ether of the sky. (B.B.V. I.iv.298)

The only source of our conviction as to Ignorance is our own immediate experience 'I do not know'. Even that experience occurs only through an extroverted gaze. But if we look with a purely introverted gaze, Ignorance does not exist. It is likekthe case of the blue colour experienced when looking at the ether of the sky. Even at time it is being experienced it does not actually exist. It is the same with Ignorance.

Teaching by Examination of The Three States of Waking, Dram and Dreamless Sleep

The exposition of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep is not aimed at teaching that those three states really exist. The purpose of the author of the Vārtika is only to communite the true nature of the Self by first teaching it through superimposing on it the three states, and then, by a critical examination of the latter, to reveal in immediate experience the eternal Self free from all changing states.

Brietly, the practical method followed forrealizing the 'Fourth' (M.V. 23, intro.) or final reality is this. While still in the state where he is subject to false superimposition, the student must indidty, he must then realize the identity of the body of the universe with the cosmic midn (Hiranyagrabha). He must then dissolve that in the Self as cause, called Prājña. And finally, he must emerge in his own true nature, beyond cause and effect, as 'neither this nor that'.

The details of this process are explained in the Vārtika on the section of the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad dealing with light (jyotih,Brhad.IV.iii.1 ff.). The individual soul as the Spirit viewed under adjuncts with intellect predominating (M.V. 44, 5, note) is of the nature of light. Through Ignorance he enjoys waking experience when the intellect is awake, and when it is asleep he sees dreams (B.B.V. IV. iii. 448). This individual soul, a false appearance composed of impressions and consisting of an individual subject and his means of cognition, is said to pass into the dream-state when the mind becomes its won object as light, and in that dream-state also the soul is self-luminous light only. But in dreamless sleep the only conditioning adjunct is metaphysical Ignorance. The Self here is the cause which will later produce waking and dram as its effects (B.B.V. IV. iii.979). In the waking state the soul performs actions through its body and organs and experiences pleasure and pain. In the dream-state, with the intellect for conditioning adjunct, it sees dreams under the impulse of

desire. In dreamless sleep its adjunct is Ingornace alone, and it there stands as the cause of the mind and other factors of the individual organism; ;that is the difference between the states of dream and dreamless sleep (B.B.V. IV.iii.1528).

In this connection, Suresvara follows the method of the Upansiahd and the reversed Commentator in using the example of a great fish. The fish stands, in his exposition, for the Self, different both from the body and the organs of the waking state, known as 'death', and from the desire and activity that prompt the further existence of the physical body. And so it can be shown that the notion that the Self undergoes transmigratory experience is due to metaphysical Ignorance (B.B.V.IV. iii.1148-51).

In dreamless sleep the soul stands as 'the Self unknown' the cause of waking and dream experience, and, being void of name and form, is verily the Absolute. For, as remarked at Brhadāranyaka Vārtika II.i. 451-2, we have the upanishadic texts, 'All these creatures go daily tot he realm of the Absolute but are carried away by delusion and do not know it' (Chānd.VIII.iii.2) and 'Thus all things here return to the supreme Self' (Prasna IV.7). The upanishadic text giving the example of the hawk, too, (Brhad.IV.iii.19, cp. M.V. 83, 12, note) is intended to expound the true nature of the Self as eternally pure, conscious and liberated (B.B.V. IV.iii.1158). The phrase 'folds its wings' refers to its remaining in Ignorance. The phrase' (is borne down) to the nest' refers to the fact that in dreamless sleep even the reflection of Consciousness rests in the form of pure Spirit (B.B.V. IV.iii.1172-3). That, therefore, which, in the two states of waking and dream was associated with Ignorance in the sense of having apparent conditioning adjuncts that were effects of Ignorance, now in dreamless sleep stands separated from Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1174-5). This is the true form of the soul, free from Ignorance, desire and action. But in waking and dream there is an extraneous conditioning adjunct, caused by Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1205-6). One must, however, rember the other point that although, as explained, desires cease when waking and dream

cease, nevertheless they do remain in dreamless sleep in the form of a latent impression, and they manifest again in the case of one who has awoken from sleep. They are never completely eliminated till meta physical knowledge of the Self dawns (B.B.V. IV.iv.378).

In dream, the Self is defiled by desire and merit and demerit. Yet it is partly luminous, because unrelated to the external world, and it conforms to and illumines the objects created by mental impressions under the impulse of desire. On the other hand, in dreamless sleep the Self stands alone, conditioned only as the cause, and assumes perfect tranquillity. Hence dreamless sleep is called perfect peace (samprasāda, B.B.V. IV.iii.976-8). We admit absence of knowledge in dreamless sleep in a certain sense. There is absence of internal knowledge of the form 'This am I', and also absence of external knowledge of the form 'these creatures'. But this absence of knowledge comes from being in identity with the supreme Self as the 'conscious One' (prājña). It is quite different from the absence of knowledge that occurs in dram and waking, which is due to apparent conditioning adjuncts. And this is taught in the Upanishad with the help of the example of the man embracing his wife (B.B.V. IV.iii.1309-10).

But how do we know that this absence of knowledge in dreamless sleep is due to attaining identity, and not to a natural absence of consciousness? Absence of knowlege is, after all, the typical characteristic of non-conscious beings (B.B.V.IV.iii.1384). It is to answer this objection that the Upanishad says, 'Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep) he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see. For there is no break in the seeking of the seer' (Brhad.IV.iii.23).

Desire, action, ignorance and the like the not the nature of the Self, as Consciousness is. And the Upanishad tells us that the soul is unattached and is not followed in waking by the effects of its experiences when dreaming (Brhad.IV.iii.15-6, cp. M.V.40,3). The relation of the Self with metaphysical Ignorance

is beginningless, (in the sense of timeless), no doubt. But it is accepted that its relation with such effects of Ignorance as positive acts of erroneous cognition, desires and so forth has a beginning (B.B.V. iii.1408-9).

But what is the connection of one who is the victim of absence of knowledge and erroneous knowledge with the metaphysical teaching (B.B.V. IV.iii.1410)? To answer this question dreamless sleep is expounded as a state free from ignorance, desire and action. Even in the dream-state thesense-organs dissolve into the vehicle of the impressions, as we know from the text, 'Himself not sleeping, he looks down on the sleeping sense-organs' (Brhad.Iv.iii.11). How could the organs be present in dreamless sleep when not even their impressions are present (B.B.V. IV.iii.1416)? So, since the action of seeing and its factors and results are alike impossible, a person does not see in dreamless sleep. And (in another sense) he does see, since he is Consciousness by nature (B.B.V. IV.iii1417).

From the feeling 'I did not see (anything)' on the part of one who has woken up, we know that, in dreamless sleep, the absence of the individual subject and his knolwege and it objects has been directly experienced in that state by Consciousness in its true nature (B.B.V. IV.iii.1420). If there had been any break in the vision of consciousness one would not be aware of dreamless sleep, as it would not have been experienced (B.B.V. Iv.iii.1438). The present participle 'seeing' in the phrase, '...although seeing, He does not see. For there is no break in the seeing of the seer...' (brhad.IV.iii.23) does not mean that there is an individual subject enjoying experience. For that is impossible in dreamless sleep. You have to be content with the explanation that the I-notion of dreamless sleep ('remembered' retrospectively in subsequent waking experience) represents the Self in its true nature. It is the subject of the participle 'seeing' in the same sort of (metaphorical) sense (not implying action) that we *speak of space as 'giving' rooms* (B.B.V. IV.iii./1442).

One should not raise the objection, 'How can the Self see at all if it has no factors of action at its disposal?' For even in world we do not see the factors of action at work before an action. Whether there is action to be done or not, before an action. Whether there is action to be done or not, factors of action as a pre-condition can be ruled out in either case (M.V. 122, 15). Moreover, in the case where seeing is constant, it is impossible to establish a relation of temporal sequence between an action and its result, so that it is impossible toestablish the existence of an end and means (and hence impossible to think of the seeing of the Witness as an action, B.B.V. IV.iii.1449). The distinctions that set up the appearance of an individual seer, his seeing and its results are shown to arise through Ignorance (B.B.V. IV.iii.1450). There is dependence on Ignorance for relation with knowledge of the not-self; but there is no such dependence or Ignorance, or the factors of action which are a mere appearance deriving from it, when it is known that only the Self exists (B.B.V. IV.iii.1451-2).

Thus in dream and waking the Self appears through Ignorance to undergo distinction according to the distinctions of name and form. But this is to the case in dreamless sleep, so that in that state one does to see duality, as one does in waking. In dreamless sleep, everything has assumed the form of the changeless Self. There is then neither Ignorance, no its effects, nor absence of Ignorance, for there is then nothing apart from the Self for the Self to witness as its object (B.B.V. IV.iii.1518-23). Therefore, in dreamless sleep the Self knows nothing, without thereby giving up its nature as Consciousness. Thus all difficulties can be explained.

The Upanishad sums of the final truth about dreamless sleep in the passage beginning '(In dreamless sleep) the see is one, transparent like water' (Brhad. IV.iii.32), cp M.V.44, intro.). Here is the meaning. Water is pure. In the state of dreamless sleep there is no awareness of cause and effect because Ignorance

and its effects *cannot penetrate that which is eternally conscious by nature. It is one, without internal distinctions, and not itself standing as an individual within a class. That is, it is one only, without a second. It is not a seer (in the empirical sense of one performing the act of seeing). For it is by nature void of the factors of action, and there is nothing for it to see. It is also non-dual because it transcends In Ignorance and its effects (B.B.V. iii. 1798-1806). It is ever immediately evident. The realm of the Absolute is no, properly speaking, either transcendent or immanent. It is that [state] (loka) which is the Absolute. The implication is that the true nature of the Self is the Absolute. This is known from the highest texts of the Upanishads, where the subject-predicate relation of the words,* and the mutual qualification of the word-meanings gives rise to a sentence which can only express an indication (and not denote a definite meaning, B.B.V. IV.iii.1819-21). this is the highest state of the soul, which puts an end to all other states (B.B.V. IV.iii.1828). It is his supreme possession, his unsurpassable state of glory. It is the highest realm to which he can attain, for it is indestructible. It is his supreme bliss. For it exceeds all other bliss, and 'all other creatures subsist on a fraction of the bliss' (B.V.V, IV.iii. 1828,-32, -36, -40).

Thus from an examination of the states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep we can establish that the self is real, that it transcends ail the not-self, that it is unalloyed, that its nature is unsure passable bliss, that it is a pure unity, that it is Consciousness and nothing else and that it is without a second.

The most important verses to consider in this regard are the following.

(1) The seeker of liberation (having identified himself with Vaisvanara, the Self as associated with the cosmos in its objective form, cp. M.V.43,6), proceeds on from Vaisvanara and identifies himself in his heart with its inner self, Taijasa or Hiranyagarbha (M.V.23; 43,6). Then he dissolves this into

its inner self, the Cosmic Vital Energy. The term 'Vital Energy' as used in this context means the Self as cause (*viz.* the Self *qua* unknown). It is the seed of every effect and is also ;known as 'the Conscious One' (prajña, M.v. 23 and 43). Effects cannot dissolve anywhere except into their material cause. Therefore,when the seeker of liberation has reached the cause of all, he should proceed on to the Absolute in its true nature, which is not a cause, by thinking 'neither this nor that'. (B.B.V. IV. ii.82-4).

(2) Just as, when the mind is awake, one identifies oneself with it falsely and feels 'I am awake', so, when the mind is dreaming and one is witnessing the dream, there is the false idea whereby one identifies oneself with the dream. (B.B.V. IV.iii.448).

(3) The Self as cause is indeed the inmost principle, but viewed under the adjunct of bare Ignorance. The effects which, as such, it produces are called waking and dream. (B.B.V. IV.iii.979).

(4) Ignorance is the cause of the mind. The mind is the condition of the individual experiencer. It is only in the realm of the body that one experiences pleasure and pain. All is caused by Ignorance of the inmost Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1528)

(5) The true form of the Self as pure and conscious and so on is set forth an example (at Brhad.IV.iii.19) by the use of the words 'as a hawk'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1158).

(6) By the image of the folding of the wings the upanishadic text teaches that, even here in this world, the creature that has sprung from Ignorance of the Self rests in its (i.e. in the Self in dreamless sleep). By the words 'is borne down to the nest' it refers to the pure form of the inmost Self assumed by the reflection of the inmost Consciousness in Ignorance when the soul comes to the inmost Self (in dreamless sleep). (B.B.V. Iv.iii.1172-3).

(7) When all the effects of Ignorance, including the mind, are withdrawn, the reflection of Consciousness is also withdrawn, as the reflection of the sun in water disappears with the disappearance of the reflecting medium. Before dreamless sleep, the Consciousness associated with Ignorance was identified with the effects of the latter (in waking and dream). The distinction between Consciousness and its supposed reflection arises from Ignorance. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1174-5).

The true nature of the reflection of Consciousness in the mind is the inmost Consciousness itself. In the states other than dreamless sleep, it appears to be distinct from the inmost Consciousness, but only through Ignorance. In dreamless sleep, however, the case is otherwise. Here it rests in its own true nature as pue Consciousness, as the reflection of the sun in water returns to its original, the sun, when the reflecting medium is removed.

(8) This is the true form of the soul that is here described, free from Ignorance, desire and action in dreamless sleep. One should know that the other form of the soul, undergoing waking and dream, is due to an extraneous cause, that sole cause being Ignorance of the Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1205-6).

(9) In dreamless sleep, when waking and dream have disappeared, all men's desires disappear with them. They just remain in the form of latent impressions. The upanishadic text (Brhad.IV.iv.7) specifies all desires, to show that, for immortality, even the latent impressions of desire have to be neutralized. When Ignorance, the cause of desire, has been eradicated, no latent impression remains over, or anything else either, as Ignorance is the root of every phenomenon in the empirical world. (B.B.V. IV. iv. 378-9).

It is only from the standpoint of empirical experience, according to Suresvara, that Ignorance and its effects are said to leave impressions (reading samskara-sesatva).

(10) The nature of the Self is pure Consciousness: it is not desire, action, (psychological) ignorance and the rest. For we know from the texts 'unattached' and 'not flowed (in waking by its experiences that it had when dreaming)' (Brhad. IV.iii.15) that desire and the rest are illusory. Pure Consciousness, raised above all change, is the true nature of the Self. Its association with metaphysical Ignorance is beginingless, while its association with desire and other effects of Ignorance is regarded as having a beginning.

When the soul is afflicted by Ignorance of the Self and consequent positive misconception, what is the teaching to which t has to turn for knowledge of the truth? This the Upanishad explains when it says, Verily, when there (in the state of dreamless sleep he does not see, he is, verily, seeing, though he does not see (for there is no break in the seeing of the seer' (Brhad.IV.iii/.23). (B.b.V.IV.iii.1408-10).

(11) The text (Brhad. IV.iii.230 syas, 'He does ot see' because there cannot be te facotrs of action in dreamless sleep. It says 'although seeing' in relation to the true state of affairs (namely the presence of the universal Consciousness). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1417).

(12) (The Self can be known without dependence on one's individual subject-object cognition yielding empirical knowledgɘ.) For it is after first beholding reality (in dreamless sleep), unattained by the triad of knower, knowledge and known, that one afterwards (is aware of that absence of the triad and) says 'I did not (then) see (in dreamless sleep)'. This absence of seeing is witnessed by the Self in its pure form as Consciousness, just as what is seen is also so witnessed (so that the Self as Consciousness is established as constant and eternal). (B.B.V. IV.iii.1420).

(13) If there were any break in the seeing of the seer in dreamless sleep one would not have the feeling of knowledge one had been to sleep. Therefore the vision of the supreme Self is void either of origin or dissolution. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1438).

(14) As one may use the participle of a verb and refer metaphorically to the actionless ether of space as 'giving space', so may one refer metaphorically to the actionless Self as 'seeing'. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1442).

(15) Because no factor of action is found at work before an act is begun, factors of actions must be deemed universally inoperative at this stage... If there is no action to be done, there can be no factors of action. And even if there is an action to be done, the notion of factors of action leads to infinite regress (as one would have to assume new factors of action to set the original ones in motion and so to infinity).

It is thus hard to show how factors of action operate at all. Moreover, in a case (like that of the constant 'seeing' of the Self), where it is impossible to establish a temporal sequence between an act and its result, it is impossible to establish the existence of an end and means either. But if Ignorance is accepted as the cause, all these difficulties become explicable. Everything is a mere appearance resulting from Ignorance. There is nothing incorrect. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1444, 1448-50)

The assertion that, even accepting factors of actions from the empirical standpoint, there is nothing wrong, appears to be no more than an artificial augment based on an unnecessary concession to the opponent's case (because Suresvara has shown at length that there cannot be factors of action at work in the case of the 'seeing' of the Seer). Hence one need to examine this argument too closely. But students may find a passage at the end of the introductory part of Sri Sankara's Commentary to Bhagavad Gitā XVIII.67 of interest. It begins 'No, for that would make what did not act into a performer of action...' (See Bh.G.Bh.XVIII.67, trans. A. Mahādeva Sāstri p. 515)

(16) where a connection of the Self with the not-self is taught, there the reference is to be a connection based on Ignorance, forming the notion, based equally on Ignorance, of an individual able to act, and of factors of action at his disposal, etc. But when for the man of wisdom then notion "All is the (actionless) Self'arises, this idea is based on reality. It does not, like the notion of a not-self, depend on Ignorance and its effects. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1451-2).

(17) Where there are distinctions (as in waking and dream) there is the appearance of Ignorance (in the form of 'I do not known'. But there are no distinctions whatever in dreamless sleep (and consequently no feeling 'I do not know' and no Ignorance, cp. M.V.122,19). Ignorance belongs to the mind, as that is where it is consistently found. It does not belong to Consciousness in the state of dreamless sleep (prāña). In the one undivided Consciousness raised above all change an (apparent) distinction arises through vision based on Ignorance, a distinction which comprises thousands of further distinctions through name, form and action. But in dreamless sleep that duality is not found. Ignorance, the cause of evil, is not present. There is than no duality for the soul to perceive through distinction into individual subject, empirical knowledge and objects, as there is in the waking and ream states. To speak of the absence of Ignorance and its effects is to affirm the sole existence of the Self, eternal and raised above all change, as the only reality. To affirm the sole existence of the Self, the cause, in dreamless sleep is to the existence of the effect as a reality. (B.B.V.IV.iii. 1517-20). We now show the method of the negation of the three states.

Ignorance of the Self is nothing real. Our certitude as to its existence rests only on the feeling 'I do not know' that arises in the course of empirical experience (T.B.V. II.176). The soul, centred in the mind and looking not inwards but outwards, convinces itself of its ignorance of the Self, as one convinces oneself of the blue colour of the (colourless) ether of the sky. But if it turns its gaze inwards, it finds neither ignorance nor doubt nor wrong knowledge in waking, dream or dreamless sleep (B.B.V. I.iv.298-9). And one should not raise the objection that one has to accept that Ignorance was present in dreamless sleep one account of the memory 'I knew nothing' that is supposed to occur to no who has awoken from it. For in dreamless sleep one does not in fact have the experience 'I do not know'. And it is not right to say that the feeling 'I did not know' (that comes to one after he has woken up represents a memory. When Devadatta remembers 'I knew that then', he remembers what he had previously experienced according to its proper details of time and place. But one cannot say that this Self looks back over what it had previously experienced in this way. For, since the Self is the Witness of time, space and causation, it cannot undergo determination by time, space and causation (since it witnesses these as objects and therefore as distinct from itself).

Ignorance, again, does not exist for its own sake. *(That which exists for the sake of another is non-conscious, cp.U.S.(prose) section 71. That for which it exists must be conscious and self-existent, in short the one Self taught in the Upanishads. What exists for the Self has no existence independent of the Self and is reducible to a temporary illusion arising on the substratum of the Self, cp. (A)nandagiri on B.B.V. I.iv, 301, IV.ii.25. T.N.)* Ignorance is an illusion arising in the Self and appearing before it, like the illusion of a rope-snake and so on. It is thus correct to dismiss it as mere false imagination. As the rope-snake is falsely imagined in the rope and is nothing other than the rope, so Ignorance is imagined in Consciousness, and, being in its true nature Consciousness, manifests there. And when the eternal Consciousness raised above all change is known, Ignorance and its effects are canceled. (B.B.V. I.iv.300-6).

It is true that at Naiskarmya Siddhi III.58 (prose introduction) Suresvara makes a case for the existence of Ignorance in dreamless sleep, saying, 'In dreamless sleep there is present that very

Ignorance of the Self that is the cause of all evil'. But there is nothing wrong here. For this was said on the assumption that everyone accepts Ignorance at its face value until it is finally cancelled through metaphysical knowledge derived from the holy texts. Nor should one think that this implies that there is no experience of the Self in dreamless sleep, which might imply, in turn, that it did not then exist. For we have to accept that the Consciousness which was infallibly present to enable us to say 'I knew nothing (in dreamless sleep)' is in fact the Self, of the nature of immediate experience (B.B.V.III.iv.103). In its true nature the Self is totally devoid of Ignorance, not only in dreamless sleep but in waking and dream as well. It is not active. It is interior to all. It constitutes all. It is the true nature both of itself and of anything else. So the Upanishad was correct to say that when it does not see, in dreamless sleep, yet it is seeing when it does not see, Brhad.IV.iii.23. It no more sees (in the sense of an activity) in waking and dream than it does in dreamless sleep. And there is no more any break in its real Consciousness in dreamless sleep than there is in waking and dream (B.B.V. IV.iii.1493-5,1907-8).

It can be proved by reason that the states of the Self are false appearances. The state of waking is a false appearance simply because of its form as waking experience, and because it has a beginning and an end, like the (admittedly illusory) appearance (to the dreamer) of being awake in dream. The effects of Ignorance that lie before us are apprehended as non-conscious, and they have no independent existence of their own, like the water seen in a mirage (B.B.V.IV.iii.1072-3). Again, waking and dream do not pertain to the true Self. For they are only found belonging to the individual soul, as apparently delimited by the mind, itself associated with psychological ignorance and desire. They do not in any way belong to the inner Witness of the individual soul. For the Witness, from the very fact of being the Witness, cannot be organically connected with what it witnesses (since the subject can never be the object nor the object subject, B.B.V.IV.iii.905). And again, all the

not-selves are false appearances, as they exclude one another mutually, like the snake, stick, trickle of water, etc., falsely imagined in the rope (B.B.V. I.iv.1496-7). And in dreamless sleep and coma they (not merely exclude themselves mutually but) all completely disappear from view (B.B.V.II.iii.222). But the Self as Consciousness is never lost (B.B.V.II.iv.126), as it is the Witness both of the feeling 'I know' and 'I do not know' (B.B.V.II.iv.129). Thus from the standpoint of the final truth, neither waking nor dream nor dreamless sleep belong to the relation less Self. These states are only illusory experiences arising from metaphysical Ignorance, like the experience of the rope-snake and the rest (B.B.V. II.i.264-6). Thus in all circumstances the Self is pure Consciousness. It is non-dual, and does not undergo different states.

The whole doctrine that the self passes through different states is taught (and then later denied) only to bring out how the supreme reality is free from such states. It is only from the texts of the Upanishads that one can know that the supreme reality is free from such states. It is only from the texts of the Upanishads that one can know that the supreme reality is the Absolute, not from logical investigation of the implications of the three states and from that alone (B.B.V. IV.iii.1112-5). That is the teaching of the Vārtika. Here are the chief verses worthy of consideration on these topics.

(18) Ignorance of one's own Self is a false appearance, alike in waking, dream and dreamless sleep, that comes into the field of practical experience, witnessed by the Self that is self-revealed.... It is only when the Conscious One, seated in the mind and identified with Ignorance, turns its gaze outwards that it fails to apprehend its own true Self and accepts Ignorance and its effects as real, like a child accepting as real the blue colour of the sky. It does not do so through its own true nature. But when its gaze is turned inwards, it finds neither ignorance, nor doubt nor wrong knowledge in waking, dream or dreamless sleep. (B.B.V.iii.1293, I.iv.298-9).

(19) One who awakens from dreamless sleep has the memory

'I did not know anything'. But that is not a genuine cognition bearing on the state of dreamless sleep. For nothing that belongs to the Self can pertain to the past, since the Self is undifferentiated by time, space or other factors. (B.B.V.I.iv 300).

(For the whole notion 'Ignorance residing in the Self was experienced in the past 'makes no sense (since neither the Self nor metaphysical Ignorance falls within time.)

(20) The innermost Self is not accepted as being touched either by past time or by future time. Whatever exists for another exists as an illusion appearing on the substratum of that which is self-existent. Hence it is traditionally taught to be false imagination. The fact that a thing belongs to the past cannot be known through perception, and the fact that a thing lies in the future cannot be known through any means of valid knowledge. Hence all notions of past and future are false knowledge... Ignorance manifests in the Self, but in truth it is only pure Consciousness. Since it is dependent on the inmost Self raised above all change, this imagined cause can be cancelled, together with its effects, (through a realization of one's true nature as the inmost Self). (B.B.V.I.iv.301-3,6)

(21) If Consciousness as immediate experience was not invariably present in dreamless sleep, how do you explain how the one who awakens from it can have the idea 'I knew nothing in dreamless sleep'? (B.B.V. III.iv.103)

(22) The Self in dreamless sleep 'is seeing though it does not see' because it has none of the factors of action, because it is interior to all, because it is all, and because it is the true nature of all else. It does not see in dreamless sleep for the reason mentioned (namely that it has none of the factors of action, so that it is present shining but does not perform any act of seeing); but one should understand that it does not see in waking and dream either, for the same reason. And just as Consciousness is unbroken throughout dream and waking, so is it also in dreamless sleep, for the reasons give.

(B.B.V.iii.1493-5)

(23) This Self has unbroken vision. This has already been declared to be the case in dream and waking. But it is true in the case of dreamless sleep also, as the text 'When there in the state of dreamless sleep....' Brhad.IV.iii.23 shows. And just as the Self transcends the factors of action in dreamless sleep as bare eternal Consciousness raised above all change, so does it also transcend the factors of action in dream and waking. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1907-8).

(24) This state of waking is unreal, simply on account of the fact that it is a state of waking. For it has a beginning and comes to an end, like the state of waking that appears (to the dreamer) to occur in dream. The waking state is a mere appearance arising from Ignorance. Its objects (since they appear before the Witness) are invariably non-conscious, and have no independent existence of their own, like the water seen in a mirage. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1072-3)

(25) It is the mind that acts, afflicted by ignorance and desire. Sleeping and waking belong to the mind; they do not belong to the Witness of the mind, pure Consciousness. (B.B.V. IV.iii.905)

(26) When a garland is misperceived as a snake, it cannot be misperceived as a stick or in other ways at the same time. Similarly, when the inmost Self s misperceived as undergoing one of the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, it cannot be misperceived as undergoing one of the others at the same time. Even under metaphysical Ignorance, the various not-selves (are seen to be unreal because they) exclude each other mutually. How much more clearly will their unreality be revealed when all Ignorance is dissolved without remainder in the inmost Self'!. (B.B.V. I.iv.1496-7)

(27) The various manifestations of the not-self (are known to be unreal because they) exclude one another mutually. And in dreamless sleep, swoon, trance and other such states the

Self as Witness reveals the complete disappearance of the not-self'. (B.B.V. II.iv.222)

(28) In dreamless sleep the individual subject and his knowledge and its objects disappear, but pure Consciousness does not disappear. However, all other things in the world apart from Consciousness exclude one another mutually and disappear altogether in dreamless sleep... Whenever there arises the notion 'I do not know', this is witnessed by the Self. How much more evidently is this the case with the feeling 'I know'? Pure Consciousness, therefore, never disappears. (B.B.V.II.iv.126,129)

(29) The relationless Self does not undergo either dreamless sleep or waking. How could it then undergo the stare of dream? Waking, dream and dreamless sleep are but natural (uncaused, beginningless) Ignorance of the Self. The imaginationary idea that the Self is asleep or awake or is dreaming belongs only to creatures asleep in the night of Ignorance. This whole universe consisting of the moving and the fixed is a mere illusion. The Supreme is its true nature, as the rope is the true nature of the illusory snake. (B.B.V. II.i.264-6)

(30) The notion that the Self passes through the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep arises from other (secular) means of knowledge. The vedic teaching appearing to confirm the existence of the three states (does not constitute valid authoritative teaching but) is only given to conform with (false) knowledge derived from other sources (secular experience). But the fact that the one who appears to be passing through (repeated cycles of) waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep is really the Absolute can only be known from the upanishadic texts. Hence it is *that* which they are concerned to communicate as valid knowledge. The purport of 'That thou art' and other metaphysical texts of the Veda is to teach that the true nature of one's own Self is the Absolute, and the true nature of the Absolute one's own Self. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1113-5)

Can There be an Injunction for Knowledge

There is a text in the section of the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad containing the teaching given to Maitreyi which runs: 'The Self, indeed, should be seen, heard about, pondered over and subjected to sustained meditation, Maitreyi Verily, through seeing the Self, through hearing about it, through thinking of it and through knowing it, all this (world) becomes known' Brhad.II.iv.5.

In this connection, the question whether or not the seeing and so on were enjoined has been a subject for dispute among philosophers. For example, Ācārya Mandana wrote: 'The phrase "should be subjected to sustained meditation" is part of one long connected passage that begins "For the sake of the Self" and ends "All this is but the Self" Brhad.II.iv.5-6. The purpose of this passage is to expound the true nature of the Slef. The phrases occurring within it, "should be seen", "should be heard about" and "should be subjected to sustained meditation", though expressed (in imperative form) as gerundives, are not separate injunctions, but (belong to the main passage expounding the Absolute and) are intended for eulogy. For the gerundive termination is said to have other meanings apart from command, such as ascribing worth or value (cp. Pāñin III.iii.169, quoted above, M.V. p.19). The text therefore only means "The Self is worthy of being seen, etc."). We have such examples of this as "Visñu is worthy of being offerer (lit. "should be offered", gerundive) the Upāmsu Sacrifice" (T.S.II.vi.6), which occurs amongst the texts about offering the Uāpāssu B.Sid. p.155; see also sabara, P.M. Bhāsya II.ii.10).

Suresvara, however, makes three distinctions in treating this problem. He says that 'should be seen' cannot be an injunction, as it refers to knowledge conditioned by reality. 'Should be heard about' and 'should be pondered over' are injunctions, since they refer to actions dependent on the human will. "Should be subjected to sustained meditation' is not an injunction. For sustained meditation *nididhyāsana* is *not an action but* that immediate experience of

one's own true Self that constitutes the goal of the Vedantic spiritual discipline.

'It should be seen', then, is not an injunction. Why not? In the phrase 'The Self should be seen' the work 'Self' refers to one's inmost Self, and knowledge of one's Self is already one's own by nature. Again, the knowledge expressed here by the verb 'seen' cannot be enjoined, as it is conditioned by reality. When the word 'knowledge' is used to refer to symbolic meditations (such as 'Woman, O Gautam, is the sacrificial fire', Chānd, V.viii.1) it stands for something that can be enjoined, but symbolic meditation is not the topic of the present passage. Again, there is no other seer apart from the inmost Self. And where the seer and that which has to be seen are the same there can be no injunction of the form 'It should be seen'. For there cannot be an injunction to an act of seeing where the seer, acting on himself, is performer and object of the same act. Therefore the teaching 'All this (world) is but the Self' (Brhad.II.iv.6) is given by the Veda after it had first used the formula 'neither this nor that' (Brhad.II.iii.6) to negate the notion that the Self had assumed the form of the not-self. And so the real force of the apparent injunction 'the Self should be seen' is to give some information about something the hearer did not previously know. This is the gist of Suresvara's refutation of the possibility of there being an injunction for seeing.

Objections raised by opponents are disposed of as follows.

One should not object that the Vedic texts making metaphysical statements are no more authoritative than casual worldly remarks like 'There are five fruits on the river bank'. Nor should one object that the words cannot be properly interconnected to form a sentence for lack of a verb. For the Veda will be an authoritative means of knowledge if it can awaken anyone to the truth of the sole reality of the one Self, a truth inaccessible to any other means of knowledge. And the Vedic text can perform this function even when the connections of the words with their meanings are not apprehended, as in the case of sentences that awaken sleepers. Nor do

the metaphysical texts ever lack verbs, as forms of the verb 'to be' can always be understood and supplied. The remark about there being fruits on the river bank concerns a matter which can be known from sources other than the spoken word. It does not concern a matter that can only be known through verbal revelation, so it was an irrelevant example.

Here are the chief verses to consider.

> (1) In the phrase 'The Self that should be seen' (Brhad.II.iv.5) the word 'Self' refers to the inmost Self, as the Self is invariably experienced as that which is inmost. The words 'should be seen' refer to a correct knowledge of that through the Veda. It is true that everyone is naturally aware of their own Self. But what they do not know is that it is the Self of all. It is that idea that is affirmed by the Veda as something new that has to be known. This text, however, could only be an injunction to act if the knower and the thing to be known were different. In the present context there can be no injunction to act, for lack of any difference between what was enjoined and the one on whom the injunction was laid. (B.B.V. II.iv.95-7)

(The idea is that, because one does not know that all this is one's own Self, it is correct to suppose that this is what the text affirms. But there is no command to perform any act here, since, although the text assumes the grammatical form of an injunction, there is no distinctionbetweenwhat is enjoined and the one on whom the injunction is laid. What we have, rather, is the communication of a piece of hitherto unknown information.)

(2) The idea "All this is the Self' is valid knowledge conditioned by the object known. Only if it had been the idea of something already familiar from worldly experience, like fire, could it have arisen in dependence on the arbitrary will of the individual knowing subject (and only in such a case could it have been the object of an injunction, for instance an injunction to meditate, as is implicitly the case in the text 'Woman, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire', (Chānd. V.viii.1, cp.M.V. p.361). So there cannot be an injunction for meta-

physical knowledge of the Self, as it is not idea that arises in dependence on the will of man. But actions like reasoning over the meaning of the words of the texts by the method of agreement an difference are enjoined, since they are dependent on the will of man. (B.B.V. II.iv.120-1)

(3) When subject and object are different, there is pervasion of the object by the subject in order to know it, as in the case of perception of a pot. But the Self cannot actively pervade itself to have knowledge of itself in this way. There cannot be pervasion where there is non-difference, for the very reason that pervader and pervaded would already be identical. (B.B.V. II.iv.135)

Unlike a material object like a pot, the Self is not capable of being pervaded through the activity of the individual knowing subject in the form of seeing. Nor can the Self's own vision (act on and) pervade itself.

(4) Nor is there any other subject who could see the Self as an object, for this is specifically denied in the text 'There is no other seer....but He' (Brad.III.vii.23). And, indeed, we do not find in the world two subjects playing between them the role of subject and object. (B.B.V.II.iv.136)

When the Vedic text says 'There is no other seer...but He'it means that, from the standpoint of the highest truth, the Self is not an object that can be seen. Even from the standpoint of worldly experience, one subject is never the object of the vision of another subject.

(5) If the seer were able to see itself, that would be a contradiction of the laws of action. And if (by some strange chance) it could do so, it would always be doing so, so that the injunction to do so would be rendered useless. (B.B.V.II.iv.137)

The contradiction of the laws of action would consist in the fact of the one doing an action being himself the object of that action. The implication of the verse is that there cannot be an injunction to

see one's own Self, whether such vision be of the very nature of the seer or whether it be associated with an individual knowing subject.

(6) Here, too, in the Brhadāranyaka as well as in the Chāndogya, the text accepts on the basis of common experience all that it has negated as not being of the nature of the inmost Self in the words 'neither this nor that' (Brhad.II.iii.6) and affirms 'All this (world) is the Self' (Brhad. II.iv.6).....The injunction here 'The Self should be seen' (Brhad.II.iv.5,6) is therefore no more than the communication of hitherto unknown information (i.e. 'The Self should be seen' = 'See that, namely, I am telling you that, the Self is as here taught', cp.M.V.125,2). The text' the Self should be seen' could not be intended as an injunction to act addressed to one not yet acting, as action is impossible in the case of the Self. (B.B.V.II.iv.104 and 115)

(7) It is not correct to say that all the texts of the Upanishads have to be interpreted as injunctions, on the ground that statements of fact are never authoritative, since they depend for their validity on knowledge gained from other sources. For the metaphysical statements of the Upanishads are an authoritative means of knowledge, since they awaken one to the sole reality of the Self, not knowable from any other source, as words are used to awaken a sleeper. (B.B.V.II.iv.148)

(8) There is no rule that a verb must appear overtly in a sentence before the words can be connected. In the metaphysical texts, verbs like 'art' and 'am' can very well be under stood and supplied even when not overtly expressed. It is true that there is dependence on other sources of knowledge in the case of the casual remark 'There are fruits on the river bank', because there the things denoted by the words 'fruits' and 'river bank' are accessible to another means of knowledge, namely perception. (B.B.V.IV.ii.161-2)

Can Three be injunction for hearing, pondering and Sustained meditation?

It is correct to hold that hearing, pondering, inner and outer control and other such parts of the spiritual discipline can be enjoined , as they fall within the scope of human will, and are indispensable auxiliaries to that rational examination of the meaning of the words of the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads which is necessary for a comprehension of their meaning. As sri) Sañkara said in his Upadesa Sñhasi):

(1) The knowledge that one is (in truth) ever liberated comes from the Vedic texts and from no other source. And knowledge of the meaning of a text is not possible without first calling to mind the meaning of its component words. It is certain that the meaning of a word is called to mind on the basis of agreements and differences (in the way one has heard the word used and the meanings for which it is made to stand). In this way one comes to know oneself as the pure transcendent Self, beyond pain or action. (U.S. verse XVIII.190-1, cp.M.V.107,2)

Let us examine this further in the context. In the Brhadāranyaka, the words 'it should be heard about' are added to show that the earlier words '(The Self) should be seen' do not imply that one should resort to all the valid means of cognition, but only to the texts of the Upanishads. As for the further phrase 'it should be pondered over', this includes resort to the various methods for determining the meaning of the Vedic texts, such as testing by the Six Forms of Evidence (M.V.p.23), as well as reasoning in consonance with the Veda.

On the other hand the phrase 'it should be subjected to sustained meditation' is declared to refer to the immediate experience in which hearing and pondering ought to culminate. When there arises that immediate intuition of one's own true nature which depends on no external factor, then there is nothing left that one has to do. When the non-dual Self has been perceived as a result of hearing and pondering ohe has the conviction 'There is no further

knowledge left to arise, there is no Ignorance left that has not been burnt up'. One should not raise the objection that the work 'nididhyāsana must mean meditation. For the meaning of the term 'nididhyāsana has been expressed by the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) in the passage, 'verily, through seeing the Self, through hearing about it, through thinking of it and through knowing it (in immediate intuition, vijñāna), all this (world) becomes known' (Brhad.II.iv.5). That meditation (dhyñna) is a prerequisite of immediate intuition is not denied. But it is immediate intuition, and not meditation and the rest of the discipline, that is ultimately required to realize the goal of liberation. Nor should one object that liberation must be impermanent if it is the result of immediate intuition. For liberation in the sense of being the one universal Self is always, and for everyone, a fact. All that has to be effected by immediate intuition is the practical negation of our Ignorance that we are the one universal Self. Liberation is in no way distinct from immediate intuition of the Self. One should understand that, if liberation is spoken of as the result of immediate intuition, this is only a figure of speech.

On this topic, the following verses should be noted.

(2) So there cannot be an injunction for metaphysical knowledge of the Self, as it is not an idea that arises in dependence on the will of man. But actions like reasoning over the meaning of the words of the texts by the method of agreement and difference are enjoined, since they are dependent on the will of man. In the same way, a person can decide whether to carry out hearing and pondering as well as inner and outer control and the other parts of the spiritual discipline - so all these practices are enjoined. (B.B.V.II.iv.121-2)

(3) One might suppose that all the means of valid cognition revealed the Self in that the cognition resulting from them depended on it intimately for their light. But the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad says 'It must be heard about', pointing thereby to the upanishadic texts. (B.B.V.II.iv.212)

One might suppose that the Self should be seen through all the valid means of cognition, because the Self as Consciousness constitutes the resultant-cognition of each. But the force of the words 'It must be heard about' is to show that it is the upanishadic texts that are the authoritative source of knowledge of the Self, since it is only through them that metaphysical Ignorance of the Self (reading ātma-ajñāna)can be brought to an end.

(4) It is the application of the Six Forms of Evidence (M.V. p.23) that brings out the true force of the words. Then the text says 'It (the Self) must be pondered over' to determine the true meaning of the traditional texts communicating it. It is clear from the command 'It must be pondered over' that what is being taught here is reality in its true nature. In Woman is the sacrificial fire' (Brhad.VI.ii.13), we do not find any injunction to ponder over the meaning. (B.B.V. II.iv.214-5).

He just remarks in passing that the injunction saying that there has to be pondering shows that the text here is concerned with final vision, not with preliminary meditation.

(5) Reasoning in conformity with the words of the Vedic texts is also enjoined, for this is what enables one to determine accurately what the words mean. (B.B.V. II.iv.216).

Reasoning is of help, for instance, to find out how the meaning of the word 'Thou' in 'That thou art' must be the Witness and cannot be anything else.

(6) Awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor is called Nididhyāsna. It is mentioned after seeing and hearing to show that a they culminate in that.... One's first knowledge of the Self is through hearing, and then one ponders over what one has heard. When hearing and pondering are complete, one comes to have immediate knowledge of the Self... Because the use of the word 'Niddidhyāsana' (lit. 'sustained meditation') might lead the hearer to suppose that meditation was meant, the Upanishad deliberately uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) as a synonym for it at Brhadāranyaka II.iv. 5, to show that meditations not here meant. I already mentioned earlier how meditation and other practices are a means to immediate experience. But immediate experience does not exist for the sake of anything else. It is taught to be just liberation, attainment of the final goal of all. (B.B.V. II.iv.217,220, 233-4).

(7) Hearing and the rest are the means to that immediate intuition which depends on nothing apart from itself. When this has arisen, nothing more is required apart from that immediate experience of the Self already attained... There is no other result of knowledge that our Self is the sole reality except the eradication of our ignorance of the fact. For this is ever by nature our true state... The one inmost Self is the reality of which cause and effect are mere false appearances. When that Self is known, how could Ignorance fail to be destroyed? Tell me, pray, how there could ever be Ignorance of the Self again. (B.B.V. II.iv.221, 235, 231).

I have given the form 'ajñāna' ('Ignorance') at the end of the last verse ('Ignorance of the Self') following Anandagiri. But if (as would also be legitimate) the word were read as 'jñāna' ('knowledge'), then we would have 'On account of knowledge of the inmost Self, no other knowledge needs to be acquired'. The passage would then agree with the end of the preceding verse (B.B.v. II.iv.230), which says 'there is (then) no knowledge that has not been acquired; there is no Ignorance that has to been destroyed'.

Comparison of Sri Sankara and Suresvara on the Topic of Hearing and the Rests

At first sight there appears to be a certain disagreement between Sri Sankara and Suresvara on the question of whether hearing and the rest can be the subjects of an injunction. Sri Sankara makes an opponent ask 'what do these apparent Injunctions mean, texts like "The Self, verily, should be seen, heard

about..." and so forth?' (B.S.Bh. I.i.4, cp. M.V.68.3). On account of his use of the phrase apparent injunctions, it might seem that he did not admit that hearing and the rest could be subjects of injunctions. But at another a place he seems to admit that hearing and therest can be enjoined. He says: 'Repetition of the affirmation must be carried out. Why? Because it is taught repeatedly. the repeated teachings like "The Self must be heard about, pondered over ad subjected to sustained meditation" point to a repetition of the affirmation' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1). For he would into say that anything had to be done unless thee were an injunction on the subject in the Veda.

In Suresvara's Vārtika, on the other hand, there is no reference to injunctions for hearing and the rest as 'apparent' injunctions. On the contrary, he says openly and emphatically that these practices are enjoined, in the words 'A person can decide whether to carry out hearing and pondering... so all these practices are enjoined' (B.B.V.II.iv.122, M.V.124,2).

And there is another apparent point for difference. In Sri Sankara's Brahma Sutra Commentary, the text 'the Self should be subjected to sustained meditation' (Brhad.II.iv.5) is accepted as referring to a duty that has to be performed. For it is treated as an act,as is shown by the passage 'And meditation (upāsana) and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) are said to constitute one act that entails repetition (B.S. Bh. IV.i.1, cp. M.V.56, 8, note). There are grounds for supposing that he regarded sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) as a species of meditation (upāsana) because in the next passage he gives as examples of it 'He assiduously meditates on (or attends on) his Guru'and 'She whose husband is abroad dwells on him fixedly' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1).

On the other hand, in the Vārtika of Suresvara 'awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor' is clearly said to be the meaning of the term 'nididhyāsana' (B.B.V. II.iv.217, M.V.124,6). And having said this, Suresvara goes on in the equal to deny that the term

'nididhyāsana' refers to an act that has to be performed. He aims to demonstrate that the term 'nididhyāsana' did not refer to meditation (dhyāna) because the text uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) as a synonym for it (B.B.V. II.iv.233 M.V.124,6).

Do the two systems, those of Sri Sankara and Suresvara, agree - or do they contradict one another on these points? If they do in fact contradict one another, which is the better? It is a point worth considering.

My own view is the following.Sri Sankara spoke of the appearance of an injunction in a particular context. His purpose was to refute the contention of the authors of the earlier commentaries (vrtti) on the Brhama Sutra that the metaphysical texts of the Upanishads were authoritative only if regarded as subordinate to an injunction to acquire metaphysical knowledge.He did this by asserting that metaphysical knowledge is something conditioned by reality, and different from meditation. Here is his text as he himself set it out.

> (1) The ideal of fire, when one is in the presence of that well known object, is not dependent on an injunction, nor is it a mere creation of the human mind. It is in fact a piece of *knowledge*, conditioned by the nature of the object perceived. It is not an act. And it is the same with all objects of the various means of knowledge (such as perception inference, etc.). This being so, knowledge of the Self in its true form as the Absolute cannot be dependent on an in junction to act. Imperative and similar forms applied to it, even in Vedic texts, lose there imperative force and become blunted, as razors become blunted if used against hard objects like stones. For here the object to which they are applied is something not subject to rejection or acquisition. (B.S.Bh.I.i.4, cp. M.v.68,2)

Thus a view is tentatively advanced by an opponent (and refuted by Sri Sankara). According to this view the Absolute can

only be taught through injunctions involving some duty to be done. But the whole theory is wrong. For there is also such a thing as knowledge of the Absolute conditioned by its true nature-that is the gist of this passage in the commentary. And it goes on to ask, 'But what do these apparent injunctions means (where the reference is to passages which say that the Self should be 'seen' or 'heard about' and so on). The very fact that this question is raised also implies that knowledge cannot be the subject of an injunction. Consider, too, the refutation of the opponent. It runs: 'But when such a person comes to desire the supreme human goal, texts like "The Self, verily, is to be seen" and so on turn him away from the natural concern with the psycho-physical organism and its affairs, and engage him in continuous remembrance of the inmost Self' (cp. M.V. 68,3). It does not say anything about whether hear ing land the rest are or are not able to be enjoined, as that is not the question a tissue (which is the refutation of the view that knowledge can be enjoined). No doubt there is the implication that there is also a certain element of enjoining a duty in places where gerundive expressions like 'should be seen' or 'should be heard about' areused; for only so will the gerundive ending in the suffixes -ya, -tavya and -aniya, which denote a duty to act, having meaning. But this does not mean that one has the right to insist that knowledge also can be the subject of an injunction, as the passage is only intended to strengthen the argument in hand (namely the refutation of the opponent's view that knowledge can be enjoined). There is another passage in Sri Sankara's Commentary that expresses the same idea.

> (2) Texts in the form of a command such as 'The Self should be seen', which are found in the sections dealing with the highest knowledge, are fundamentally for the purpose of turning the hearer in the direction of knowledge of the Self" and are not primarily to be regarded as injunctions to become aware of the real. Even in the world, when people give a command and say 'Look here' or 'Listen to this', the meaning of such phrases realy is 'Pay attention', and not 'Acquire a piece of direct knowledge'. When anyone is in proximity with a knowable object, knowledge of it sometimes arises and sometimes does not. Therefore, anyone who wishes to acquaint someone with an object should show it to him. When it has been shown to him, knowledge will arise according to the nature of the object and the means of cognition applied. (B.S. Bh. III.ii.21, cp. M.V. 68,4).

Thus the force of the injunctions' apparently enjoining hearing and so on is not actually to enjoin immediate knowledge through these disciplines. Their force, as the revered Commentator concludes by saying, is to inculcate attention to the Self. There is no contradiction with what is said at Brahma Sutra Commentary IV.i.1, as it is taught there that it is just this attention to the Self that has to be repeatedly practiced.

Suresvara also maintains in his Brhadāranyaka Vārika that only that which is within the scope of free human will can be enjoined. He doe snot insist on denying that knowledge can arise from one act of hearing and so on. His words are 'the action of hearing and so on must be continued here diligently until the immediate intuition we have spoken of arises in all its glory' (b.B.V. II.iv.218). So there is no difference between the two systems in regard to the teaching that hearing and pondering are opens to injunction.

Suresvara does give the appearance of saying that no one could attain direct and immediate intuition of the Self merely from hearing. For one of the verses of the Vārtika beings 'Acquaintance with the Self is first through hearing, ad then one ponders over what one has heard' (B.B.V. II.iv.220, M.V.124, 6). On the other hand Sri Sankara says in his Brahma Sutra Commentary, 'Repeated resort to hearing, pondering and sustained meditation would indeed be useless in the case of the person who gained immediate experience of the fact that his true Self was the Absolute merely from hearing the text "That thou art"

Spoken once' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.2). How could there be such a contradiction? In this case, too, we reply, there is nothing more than a superficial appearance of disagreement.For Sursvara wrote in the Naiskarmaya Siddhi: 'Of the (four different kinds of hearers of the text "That thous are"), there is one who knows "that which is not the meaning of any sentence" in his inmost Self. For him, all the not-self has come to an and. As all his impediments have been destroyed, there is in his case nothing more to be said. Nor is there anything further to be said about the one who acquired realization merely from hearing the text (that is, without having to reason over it at all). He, also, is in possession of some supernatural power' (N.Sid. III.64, prose intro.). Thus when it was said in the Brhadāranyaka Vārtika 'One's first knowledge of the Self is through hearing' and so forth, this was only said with reference to those who are unable to apprehend the meanding of the text and realize that their own true Self is the Absolute merely through hearing it once. So there is agreement between the system of Sri Sankara and Sursvara in maintaining that immediate knowledge can arise through mere hearing.

Let us therefore turn our attention to the apparent contradiction on the subject of 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana). In Sri Sankara's Brahma Sutra Commentary, 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) is seen to be a kind of spiritual practice and to be enjoined. Speaking of the term 'sustained meditation', for instance, he says clearly that when we are using it we are talking of an act that entails repetition' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.1, cp. M.V.56, 8, note). And he says also, 'Pondering ad sustained meditation too, like hearing, are for the sake of direct experience' (B.S. Bh.I.i.4). Thus he refers to 'sustained meditation something different from immediate intuition, as something to which one has to apply oneself for the sake of immediate intuition. So we conclude that for him sustained meditation was a kind of practice that could be enjoined. He also held that 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) was not different in kind from meditation in general (upāsan). For

at some places he uses the term 'upāsanā' to stand for it, as when he say 'Meditations (upāsanā) aimed at right intuitive knowledge have to be performed until the final end is achieved, like pounding the paddy to extract the rice' (B.S.Bh.IV.i.12, M.V.56,8).

And yet there is a certain difference between 'sustained meditation' (nididhyāsana) and meditation as described by Sri Sankara in the following passage: 'Consider the texts, "Man, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire" and "Woman, O Gautama, is the sacrificial fire" (Chānd. V.vii.1, V.viii.1). Here the identification of man or woman with the sacrificial fire is a mental idea. It is an act owing its origin solely to the injunction to meditate a thus. It is therefore an action, and one that is freely determined by the human will' (B.S.B.I.i.4). Sustained meditation (nididhyasana) as conceived by Sri Sankara differs from meditation as described above in that it does not owe it origin solely to the injunction to meditate. For hearing about the Self, pondering over it and subjecting it to sustained meditation are for the sake of something which can experienced here in his world, and for realizin one's identity with the Self. This is shown in such a passage as 'The Self comes to be seen through the disciplines of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation resolutely pursued. Right knowledge of the Absolute as the sole reality only dawns when these three disciplines of hearing, pondering and sustained meditation are funded into one, and not otherwise, for example through hearing alone' (Brhad.Bh.II.iv.5). It follows also from the passage: 'But in any case pondering must be carried out by reasoning in accordance with what is laid down in the Veda. And sustained meditation must be performed on what has been pondered reationally, on what has been ascertained through revelation and reason (Brhad.Bh.II.v.1, intro.) Even though this discipline is referred to by the term 'upansana' it is evidently different from such meditations as those prescribed in the texts speaking of woman as the sacrificial fire, which are for the sake of a result not to be perceived in the present life namely the accumulation of spiritual merit through meditation. For the notion that woman is he sacri-

ficial fire is not a notion based on the true nature of reality. It is formed only through obeying the injunction to meditate on this theme, and it brings its results not here in this like life but in other worlds. (to be attained after death). But after death). But the case with sustained meditations different. That which one subjects to sustain meditation one perceives here in this very life. It is a case of sustained attention and nothing else. That is the difference between meditation (upāsanā) and sustains meditation (nididhyāsana) in the system of Sri Sankara.

It is well known that words like 'vision', 'knowledge' and so on may be found used by Sri Sankara quite appropriately either to designate knowledge of the real or else to designate a certain form of deliberate arbitrary mental activity; for they may be used in different senses according to whether they are addressed to fit candidates for the higher or for the lower form of knowledge of the Absolute (the latter being not so much knowledge of the Absolute as meditation on it under prescribed forms.) And we should understand that, in the same way, phrases such as 'one should meditate' or 'one should practice sustained meditation' may either refer to the mere cherishing of a mental idea (bhavana) or else to sustained attention to previously attained right knowledge - according to the context. That is how we explain the use of the term 'sustained meditation' in Sri Sankara's system.

Now let us consider Suesvara's Vartika. He says,' Awakening to immediate knowledge of the supreme Self depending on no external factor is called nididhyāsana' (B.B.V. II.iv.217), M.V.124,6). From this clear statement one deduces that for him the term nididhyāsana cannot refer to any activity of the form of cherishing a mental idea (bhāvanā), although he does not deny that meditation is required as a preliminary discipline for right metaphysical knowledge. We learn this from the sequel, when he says 'I already mentioned earlier how meditation and other practices are a means to immediate experience. But immediate experience does not exist for the sake of anything else. It is

taught to be just liberation, attainment of the final goal of all" (B.B.V. II.i.234, M.V.124,6). This shows that though Sri Sankara and Suresvara understood the term 'nididhyāsana' in a different sense, their systems agree in munching that meditation is an activity and a preliminary discipline for knowledge. However, suresvara does insist on the point that because the Upanishad uses the term 'immediate intuition' (vijñāna) in the sequal (Brhad.II.iv.5) as a synonym for the 'nididhyāsana' referred to just before, one should not suppose that it had meant 'meditation' by 'nididhyāsana' (B.B.v. II.iv.233, M.V.124,6).

'Niddidhyāsana' is placed here in the Upanishad in apposition with hearing and pondering, so it is proper to suppose that it represents an activity. And we find the equivalent of 'vijñāna' in the form of a verb used elsewhere to denote action for the sake of immediate intuition, as in 'That one should investigate, that is what one should desire to know in immediate intuition' (Chānd.VIII.i.1,vii.1;; cp. M.V.52,9 and note). In the present text (Brhad.II.iv.5) too, we can very well accept that the term 'nididhyāsana' means meditation for the sake of direct vision. For Suesvara himself accepts such meditation as the cause of direct vision. And if one takes 'The Self should be seen' (Brhad.II.iv.5) to refer to immediate experience conceived as the result of seeing, then there would be nothing wrong in taking hearing, pondering and sustained meditation (nididhyāsana) as being a threefold activity enjoined for the sake of that result. It seems, therefore, that the revered Commentator's explanation of the term 'nididhyāsana' is the better one. Otherwise (i.e. on Suresvara's view) it appears that useless repetition would be attributed to the Upansiahd when it says 'drastavya' (should be seen) followed later by 'nididhyāsitavya' (interpreted by Suresvara as 'should be seen in immediate intuition'). In any case, there is no disagreement between the two authors on the question of what are the means to metaphysical knowledge, so that no serious difficulty arises.

The Injunction for Inner and Outer Control and the other disciplines

The text 'This is the eternal glory of the one who has realized the Absolute' (Brhad.Iv.iv.23, cp. M.V.53,7) means that the person who has gained enlightenment has the eternal glory of realizing the undifferentiated realty expressed as 'neither this nor that'. A verse quoted in the text expresses the nature of the glory of the enlightened person by saying 'He is not trained by action, which is evil' - meaning that the result of his exalted state is to place him beyond the 'taint' of karmic merit or demerit.

Suresvara first explains the term 'one who know this state' (pada-vit) accord in to Sri Sankara's Commentary, and then goes on to suggest an alternative meaning of the term as 'one who knows the meaning of the words' (padārtha-vit, B.B.V. I.,IV 1190). On this view ,there would be an injunction to discover the meaning of the individual words of the metaphysical texts, and the reward for obeying it would be a knowledge of the meaning of the sentences which they composed.

The upanishadic text continues, 'Therefore, possessed of inner and outer control, abandoning all action for personal ends, strengthening himself by voluntary resistance to discomfort, and concentrating his mind, he sees the Self here in the midst of this life in the present body' (Brhad.IV.iv.23). Suresvara explains that this passage, as connected with what went before, implies the idea 'Because knowledge has this result, therefore he who knows thus becomes possessed of the disciplines of inner and outer control and the rest and comes to know the meaning of the word "glory"' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1192-3).

It is said that such an one, possessed of the fourfold means to liberation (discrimination, dispassion, the sixfold spiritual equipment - (see the qualities mentioned at Madhavananda, p. 766) - and desire for liberation), that is, having inner and outer control and the other spiritual prerequisites, having distinguished the

Self from the not-self through reasoning by the method of agreement and difference, finally comes to see 'All is the Self' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1201-2).

In the modern printed editions of Sri Sankara's Commentary at this point we read (Brhad. Bh.IV.iv.1201-23). '"Possessed of inner control" (sānta) means "desisting from the activities of the external sense-organs" and "possessed of outer control" (dānta) means "free from mental thirst"' One must presume that these terms (santa and dānta) have been written the wrong way round due to the carelessness of some copyist. For elsewhere we find an explanation running '"Inner control" means "the coming to rest of the mind"' and '"outer control" means" the coming to rest of the external senses"' (Bh.G. Bh.XVI.1). An in line with this we find Suresvara saying in the present passage of the Vartika. 'First he becomes possessed of outer control, then possessed of inner control, and afterwards he withdraws from all activity for personal eds.For in interpreting the sequence the rational order in which the qualities would have to be developed must take precedence over the literal order in which they happen to be mentioned in the text under comment' (B.B.V. IV.iv.1203-4).

Suresvara next addresses himself to the question. 'Why should there be an injunction for inner and outer control and the rest, when the desire thou pursue them arises naturally? He says that human actions are of four kinds, based respectively on transgression of the law, personal desire, unthinking instinct and duty (B.B.V. IV.iv.1208). It is clear that the seeker of liberation cannot indulge in the first three. But how could a man of understanding want to pursue even duty when he sees that it leads to the same evil (namely rebirth) as non-performance of it? (B.B.V. IV.iv.1213). Therefore, when a person is acting for duty's sake his mind naturally becomes purified, and he comes to feel that he must give up even this form of action, so that the desire for inner and outer control leading on to the capacity for withdrawal from all action for personal ends arises naturally. We find teaching to the same effect in the Smrti: 'The wise person should apply himself con-

tinuously to the broad moral principle (yama, cp.Yoga Sutra II.29.f.), but he should not apply himself to the particular daily duties '(niyama,Manu smrti IV.204).

If you argue in this manner and ask why inner control and rest are enjoined, the reply is that, even though these practices might be prompted naturally, the function of the upanishadic text is to enjoin them specifically as means to knowledge of reality. Or again, it might be that the mere idea of withdrawal from activity for persona lends might arise naturally, without the idea of duty, expressed in the feeling 'I must actually carry that withdrawal out'. That duty of carrying out to the practices is what is enjoined here (B.B.V. IV.iv.1220). Nor would it be correct to raise the objection. 'The mention of inner and outer control would have been quite enough, since all action is given up through them. What was the need for specifying withdrawal as well?' For in sound exegesis, the positive injunction to perform daily duty will prevail over a mere general negation, which is always open to exceptions, so that the upanishadic text enjoining withdrawal has to be supplied to bring about the definitive abandonment of the daily duties (B.B.V. IV.iv.1233-6).

One should not raise the objection 'Hearing and cogitation and so on involve disturbance of the mind just as much as performance of the daily duties. Why is no effort made to discourage them?' For it would be wrong to give them up, since they are predominantly helpful to the attainment of withdrawal (B.B.V. IV.iv.1238).

The discipline of strengthening oneself through voluntary resistance to discomfort implies acquiring the power to endure the pairs of opposite (heat and cold, pleasure and pain and so forth). The upanishadic text adds 'concentrating his mind'. This is to enjoin the renunciation even of those activities, such as casual fantasies, in regard to which man is not naturally free. 'With faithful his (sole) wealth' (Brhad.IV.iv.23, Ma dhyandina recension) enjoins the total renunciation of all action (B.B.V.

IV.iv.1269).

Thus with the help of these auxiliary disciplines a person should come to see the Self even while alive in the present body, through reasoning by agreement and difference. Then he comes to see all as his own Self (B.B.V. IV. iv.1278).That is the meaning of brhadāranyaka Upanishad Iv.iv.23. One should observe the following verses of Suresvara.

> (1) First one should acquire outer control, then inner control, and finally the capacity for withdrawal from all activity for personal ends. For the logical order in which the qualities have to be developed takes precedence (in interpretation) over the order in which they happen to be mentioned in the text under comment. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1203).
>
> (2) Yes, it is true that there can be no injunction for inner control and the rest, since they are prompted in the natural course. They are prompted naturally, it is true. But what the Vedic text does is to lay down authoritatively that they are the specific means leading to correct knowledge of the inmost Self. (B.B.V IV.iv.1218).
>
> (3) Or else we may say that the idea of abandonment of action comes naturally, as explained, but that the notion that it is a duty that one has to carry out (if one wishes to attain enlightenment) does to arise naturally. Hence it is enjoined. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1220).
>
> (4) The injunction to perform the daily obligatory ritual all one's life will certainly be a more powerful authority and prevail over any *general* injunction to give up action (as the particular injunctions to kill at a sacrifice prevail over the *general* prohibition 'One should not harm any living being'). For the injunction to do the daily obligatory ritual all one's life is only concerned with keeping one's body alive (and to with ministering to and encouraging the egoistic passions). Since the *general* injunction to inner and outer control and

so on will not suffice to annul the injunction to do the daily ritual all one's life, the text takes the further step of *specifically* enjoining the abandonment of all actions for personal ends (uparati). (B.B.V. IV.iv.1225-6).

(5) If the performance of the obligatory daily ritual is prohibited because it creates disturbance, wandering about to beg for one's food and other activities of the monk also create a great deal of disturbance. Why are they not prohibited too? Hearing and pondering over the upanishaic texts, too, cause a good deal of disturbance. Why are not these activities also prohibited by the Veda, as well as the rituals? But this objection is wrong. For these activities contribute to the chief goal. Wandering about to beg for alms and the rest are to prohibited as they are engaged in for the sake of that goal. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1235-7).

(6) and now, by saying 'concentrating his mind', the upanishadic text enjoins continual reduction to a minimum of those actions which one is not free to abandon entirely. (B.B.V. IViv.1246).

There must be the strictest control over those activities of the mind and the senses which we are not free to abandon entirely, such as seeing, hearing, mental fantasy and so forth. Where concentration is enjoined, it means that one should absorb the senses in the mind and the mind in the Self (through meditation).

(7) One should not suppose that the reading (of the Madhyand in a recession) 'With faith for his (sole) wealth' is otisoe, on the ground that total renunciation has already been prescribed. For the enlightened person still has some action to perform in the realm of perceptible objects (in the form of maintaining the body and so on). The purpose of the phrase is to enjoin there ling quishment of any feeling of 'mine' in regard to the instruments or materials of these acts. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1268).

The purpose of the text 'With faith for his (sole) wealth' is to enjoin the abandonment of feelings of possession even towards objects like the begging bowl.

(8) Faith is his only possession. Because he has nothing else, the one who has abandoned all actions is called 'One who has faith for his (sole) wealth'. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1269).

(9) He should see the Self while he is yet in the body, separating it from the whole mass of the not-self through reasoning by agreement and difference supported by the spiritual disciplines mentioned above. Or the reading may be just 'He see...'. (B.B.V. IV.iv.1272-3).

To read 'He should see...' would be to follow the reading of the Madhyandina tradition.

How action and Meditation Relate

There is a passage in the Vāritka which explains the order in which the various disciplines leading to the rise of metaphysical knowledge have to be practised and describes the method of these practices.

(1) Only metaphysical knowledge is required for the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance. Only inner control and the other spiritual disciplines are required for metaphysical knowledge. Only purification of the mind is required for the acquisition of inner control and the other spiritual disciplines. Only the performance of the daily obligatory ritual is required for the purification of the mind. Metaphysical Ignorance of the Self is the sole cause of action, mental, vocal orphysical. When that (metaphysical Ignorance) has been cancelled by knowledge of the Self, how could there be any further dependence on action? (B.B.V. I.iii.98-100).

It is also said in the Naiskarmya Siddhi:

From performance of the obligatory daily rituals comes

merit;from merit comes destruction of (the karmic effects of) sin; from this comes purity of mind; from this comes a correct evaluation of transmigratory life; from this comes indifference to it; from this comes desire for liberation; from this comes the search for the means to liberation; from this comes renunciation of all ritualistic action and its accessories (the sacred thread, etc.); from this comes practice of Yoga; from this the focusing of the mind within; from this a knowledge of the meaning of the metaphysical texts like 'That thou art'; from this the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance; from this establishment in one's own Self alone, according to the texts, 'Verily, being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Brhad.IV.iv.6) and 'Though already released, he acquires final release' (Katha II.ii.1). (N.Sid.I.52, prose intro., cp.M.V. 60,2 and 3) Meditations, it is clear, each have their stated reward like rituals. And just as the performance of the obligatory daily ritual is enjoined as preliminary contributing to the rise of knowledge, or even as all ritual is laid down as a means to the awakening of the desire for knowledge, so in the section of the Veda devoted to knowledge and meditation, the meditations are laid down as a means to preparing one to become fit for knowledge. For we have texts like, 'When you are released from here, where will you go?' (Brhad, IV.ii.1) And we know that meditations are useful on the path of gradual release, because they are taught in connection with the Path of the Flame and elsewhere. *(On the Path of the Flame, see Deusssen, 1912, Chapter XXX. T.N.)*

> (3) Whatever is taught on the subject of meditations in the Knowledge-Section of the Veda is only for the sake of *preparing* oneself for the knowledge that all lis the one Self. We know from the text 'When you are released from here where will you go"/ (Brhad.IV.ii.1) and from referencer to the Path of the Flame that meditations are not limited in their results to the rewards promised for them (but may also lead to gradual release). This shows correctly the relation between the Rituals-Section and the Knowledge-Section of the Veda, and there are no grounds for asserting any different relation. (S.V. 329-31).

Meditations:; *The reference is to those meditations taught in the Knowledge-Section of the Veda and dissociated with the Path of the Flame and other teachings about release by stages. The reference is not to all meditations throughout the Veda in general.*

Not limited in their results tote rewards promised for them: *It means that they are not merely concerned with meditation and worship, but are also a means to knowledge. No attention should be paid to the claim of Ānandagiri that the purpose of the meditations is liberation and that this purpose cannot be achieved except through a succession of stages. There are no grounds for it.*

> (4) What Sri Yājñavalkya asked King Janaka was (not about entry into the world of a deity at death through meditation, about which the king knew, but) 'When you leave the first plane of existence, what is the second to which you will go?' This was to show that meditation on deities and purification of the mind through similar practices are also a means to the (gradual) attainment of knowledge. Sri Yājñavalkya's question, 'Why you are released from here, where will you go?' really meant 'Do you believe that, in the case of one fit for the highest knowledge, all the meditations prescribed in the Upanishads lead to liberation by stages?' (B.B.V. IV.ii.12-13, cp. M.V. 83,5).

All such meditations may result in release by stages: the incidental implication here is that they retain their lower purpose for those who are to fit for immediate liberation. For it is only here and there in the Upanishads that the teaching of the Absolute in its highest form is exhibited, as indicated, for instance, by certain phrases in the conversation between Gargya an

dAjātasatru, or in that between King Janaka and Sri Yājñavalkya, such as: "'It cannot be known if there is no more knowledge than that" said Ajātasatru. "Then let me come to you as a pupil", said Gārgya' (Brhad.II.i.14) and "'Very well", said Sri Yājñavalkya, "I will tell you where you will go (i.e. nowhere, because the king had already reached the state beyond fear)"' (Brhad.IV.ii.1; see B.B.v. IV.ii.31 ff.).

There is no other Liberation Except Eradication of Ignorance

There is a text in the Brhadāranyaka which runs: 'I am in touch with the subtle, far-roaching ancient path, having finally discovered it. By this path the wise who have known the Absolute go to the shining realm after leaving here, released' (Brhad.IV.iv.8). Here the knower is not different from the known, the Absolute, so the phrase 'I am in touch with' is used (B.B.V. IV.iv.549). 'scovered it' means 'have found it through the teachings of the Veda and the Ācārya' (B.B.V. IV.iv.550). Having turned their backs on Ignorance by following this path, and having attained to the Absolute, they go. Those who have known the Absolute 'dissolve in the Absolute', this is the meaning of 'go to the shining realm after leaving here' (B..V. IV.iv.552). 'After leaving here' does not imply that they have to wait for the death of the body before they attain the Absolute. For the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance, the cause of illusory empirical experience, they have to wait for metaphysical knowledge only, and for nothing else (B.B.V. Iv.iv.554). The passage agrees with and confirms the other text which runs 'Verily, being nothing but the Absolute, he dissolves in the Absolute' (Brhad.IV.iv.6), says Ruresvara, commenting on a later part of the text (B.B.V. IV.iv.560).

The following verses should be noted.

(1) Because it would be impossible for the Absolute not to include me, therefore it is said 'I am in touch wit the path'. This path, as described, has come to me. I discovered it

myself, following the teachings of the Veda and the Ācārya. In Knowledge of the inmost Self, the subject is not different from the object. (B.B.V. IV.iv.550).

(2) This 'shining realm' (the Absolute, not 'heaven') was what was really meant before by the word 'svarga', even in the phrase 'He who wants svarga should offer sacrifices'. For that which is established by the knowledge arising from the upanishadic texts cannot *be reached through rituals. (B.B.V. IV.iv.555).*

Even in the earlier remark, 'He who wants svarga should offer sacrifices', the real reference was to the 'Absolute as a shining realm', not to 'heaven' as a happy abode. In any case, it is only the Absolute (appearing as heaven) under a conditioning adjunct that can be reached through rituals.

(3) The word 'svarga' is used here only to mean 'the highest bliss'. Because it occurs in the context of teaching liberation, it is something eternal. Hence it cannot here mean what comse as the result of performing rituals. (B.B.V. IV.iv.556).

(4) On the (false) theory that liberation depended on the death of the body, it would depend on dissolution in the cause. But after the eradication of the cause of all, enlightenment supersedes automatically, and nothing else is needed. (B.B.V. IV.iv.558).

It would depend on dissolution in the cause: *It means dissolution in the Absolute as yet unknown, assuming some such other apparent form as the cosmic vital energy.*

After the eradication of the cause of all: *This means after the eradication of metaphysical Ignorance.*

(5) No other obstacle to liberation is admitted except Ignorance. Accordingly, when Ignorance has been destroyed, then, a person (nr) is liberated already in this life even before he is finally liberated from rebirth at the death of the body. The Upanishad has already taught this earlier in the

text 'Being thing but the Absolute, he disolves in the Absolute' (Brhad.IV.iv.6) No later upanishadic passage, therefore, could make us believed that liberation depend on the death of the body. (B.B.V. IV. iv.559-60).

Liberates already...before one is...liberated from rebirth: *This is a reminiscence of Katha Upanishad II.ii.1.*

All Duality is Imagined Through Ignorance

In the system of Suresvara, all duality is an effect of Ignorance. There is therefore nothing else to be denounce Ignorance has been eradicated. The distinction between the Self and the not-self, the distinction between known and unknown, the distinction between real and unreal, the distinction between being and not being individual knowing subject - all these distinctions arise through Ignorance. Five 'sheaths' encasing the individual and five corresponding cosmic sheaths standing as their causes are distinguished only through Ignorance. Other distinctions like that between manifest and unmanifest, effect and cause whole and parts, action and it component factors and results are also set up by Ignorance alone. The Witness, the Lord, creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe, the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, and, in a word, the very relationship of the Self with Ignorance itself, is all the work of Ignornace alone. Therefore when vision of the inmost principle is attained and Ignorance brought to an end, all bondage to transmigratory experience ceases immediately. The manifestation of Ignorance and its later eradication have no effect whatever on the Self, the principle of reality, any more than the imagination of a snake in a rope and the later cessation of that imagination have any effect on the rope. Here also, as in the system of the revered Commutator, the method of false attribution followed by subsequent retraction is consistently followed everywhere. This we have to accept.

(1) Clothed in the livery of being an individual knowing subject, the Self beholds the not-self; but it cannot behold the Self as an object in this way, as the Self is the pure light of Consciousness and nothing else. (B.B.V. I.iv.734).

(2) The distinction between known and unknown, the distinction between appearing as knowledge and as Ignorance, and the distinction between being and not being an individual subject enjoying knowledge - none of these distinctions being to the Self. For they are not self-established. They depend on the Witness. (T.B.V. II.666).

(3) Texts like 'Darkness (Ignorance) is death, (light is immortal)' (Brhad.I.iii.28) and 'In the beginning, this universe was water' (Brhad.V.v.1) show that metaphysical Ignorance is continually at work, either in manifest or unmanifest form. 'Emerging from these elements' (Brhad.II.iv.12), the Lord, though raised above all change, appears through Ignornace as the Knower of the Field (M.V. p.35), through of a illusory appearance of Himself as the not-self. (B.B.V., I.ii.136-7, cp M.V.118,11 and note)

(4) That which is neither a cause nor an effect assumes the appearance of cause and effect through Ignorance. Hence the Veda works for the eradication of the latter... Ignorance of the Self manifests everywhere as cause and effect, though it has for its true nature that (the Self) which is not either a cause or an effect. It is witnessed as an object by its own true Self. (B.B.V. I.ii.130 .I.iv.309).

(5) The notion which we have here in the world of whole and parts belongs to the plane of Ignorance of the inmost Self. It does not belong to the supreme Self, in which all Ignorance (lit. blindess) is negated by 'neither this nor that'. (B.B.V.I.iii.269)

(6) True Being does not undergo and is not a cause. It appears as a cause through Ignorance, and also as action and all its component factors and results. (B.B.V. I.ii.128).

(7) That supreme principle of reality, which is indicated by the negative texts such as 'Not gross...' (Brhad.III.viii.8), which in its true nature lies divested of Ignorance and its effects, appears as 'the Witness' and 'the Inner Ruler' when apparently limited by the adjunct of Ignorance, its own illusory manifestation. (B.B.V. I.iv.151).

(8) And so the creations and withdrawals of the universe down the ages are imagined, just as the distinctions of time and space are. When you have seen reality, you know that the creation, maintenance and withdrawal of the universe are impossible. (B.B.V. II.i.411, cp M.V. 118, 15 and note)

(9) The imaginary idea that the Self is asleep or awake or is dreaming belongs only to creatures asleep in the night of Ignorance. (B.B.V. II.i.265, M.V. 122,29)

(10) The individual knower, stationed in the intellect and identified with it , convinces himself of the presence of Ignorance and its effects in the Self, though in truth it is not present, through his own extraverted gaze - as simple souls attribute blue colour to the colourless ether of the sky. (B.B.V. I.iv.298, M.V.121,10)

It should be understood that certain verses that have already been quoted above in different contexts have been reintroduced in the present section to show that Suresvara approved the method of teaching through false attribution followed by subsequent retraction.

The form of Non-Duality Approved in the Vartika

The Vārtika of Suresvara accepts that the true Self, as the absolute, innon-dual. It is accessible when meta physical Ignorance, the source of the whole imagin ary network of duality, has been eradicated through the texts of the Upanishads. This is what one learns from the study of the Vārtika. Suresvarācārya refuted all the existing systems of Advaita opposed to his own. He did so on the authority of Vedic revelation, backed by reason and his own direct intuition, as we have had occasion to note at the point where we examined the different varieties of the early period of the teaching (cp. M.V. 90, intro.) We have also explained here and there in the present chapter some of the differences between the system of Ācārya Mandana and that of the Vārtika. Various theories of Advaita accepted or tolerated by Mandana are refuted by Sursvara: we might refer to the theories of Non-Dualism of the Word (Sabdādvaita, cp. M.V. 102,3), Non-dualism of Being, where Being is conceived as a universal (sattādvaita, cp. M.V. 102, 4) and Non-Dualism of Positive Being (bhāvādvaita, cp. M.V. 102, 5). We shall close this chapter with a few verses on these topics.

(1) That which has in truth no name or form manifested as name and form, depending solely on Ignorance (i.e. manifested at the beginning of the world period). Statement, in general, is called 'name' (nāma); the stated, in general, is called 'form' (rupa). Through these two categories the Lord is able to manifest Himself for all creatures born in the realm of manifestation; if He had stayed in his unmanifest form this would not have possible. (B.B.V.I. iv. 390-2)

For the Non-Dualism of the Word adopted by Mandana, one should consult Brahma Siddhi pp.17-19 (cp. Potter, 1981, pp. 356-8).

(2) Therefore (i.e. because mental repetitions traditionally rated higher than oral repetitions of the texts) the true nature of the Yajur Veda (and of all vedic texts) is to be divine knowledge implanted in the mind. In this way the eternality of the Vedas can be rightly explained (since eternal Consciousness pervades the mind). Their power to communicatae can be established if they are not taken as physically spoken words (but as ideas); it cannot be established if their absence is supposed to be the (assumed) eternal principle (sphota) latent in the spoken word. (T.B.V. II.297-8).

For Mandana's views on 'Sphota', one should consult his work the Sphota Siddhi (see Bibliography, under Biardeau).

(3) Here in the upanishadic text the term 'the Absolute' is used in its direct meaning as he reality that is neither transcendent nor immanent, neither a universal nor a particular. (B.B.V. IV.iii.1815).

The Absolute is described in these terms throughout the Vārtika, as at B.B.V. I.iv. 656, 745, 1073, 1272, 446; II.i.371; II.iii.12, 240; II.iv.14; III.iv.38 and so forth (cp. also M.V. 119,6). But Mandana understood the Absolute to be the universal called Being (sattā), see Brahma Siddhi p. 37 (M.V. 102,4).

(4) The inmost principle, raise above all change, remains contemplating itself as the light (lit. result) in every cognition, witnessing all knowledge of being and non-being. It is itself that immediate experience that is not experienced by another. And so when the individual knowing subject and his knowledge and its objects cease, then the inmost Self establishes itself as the sole existent by its own inherent power. When the fact that the individual subject and his knowledge and its objects do not exist is established through awakening to one's true Self, then the notion of 'not' indicates that which is eternally luminous and not knowable by any exterior means of knowledge. (B.B.V. II.iii.227-9).

*The implication of this is that the notion of 'not' does not apprise one of non-existence. And this refutes the Non-Dualism of positive Being (bhāvādvaita). But Mandana accepts it. See Brahma Siddhi p.4.**

(At B. Sid. p.4, cp. M.V. 102, 5, Mandana makes an opponent remark that the Absolute can be associated with positive attributes (e.g. bliss) an negative attributes (e.g. absence of the world or of Ignorance). As Mandana does not contradict this, he was taken by later authors as having accepted the view that the Absolute could have the negative attributes of absence of the universe' or 'cessation of Ignorance' (cp. B.Sid., ed. Kuppuswami, English intro. pp. xi-xv). It is non-dual in its positive aspect (bhāvādvaita), but tolerates a kind of duality in that it has negation of various kinds for its 'negative attributes'. Bhāvādvaita, which rests on the error of reifying negations and setting them up as a strange kind of reality, reappears in such later Advaita authors as Vimuktātman (cp. M.V. 234) and Ānandabodha (cp. M.V. 275). No such reification is found in Suresvara. For him the word 'not' merely indicated the Absolute in its true form. T.N.)

Chapter-9

The Mastery of the Nights

Chapter-9

Sadhana can go on in the dream or sleep state as well as in the waking.

(Sri Aurobindo,-Letters on Yoga, p.1481)

To make use of the nights is an excellent thing, it has a double effect: a negative effect, it prevents you from falling backward, losing whatever you have gained — that indeed, is painful — and a positive effect, you make some progress, you continue your progress.

(The Mother, *Bulletin,* Vol. XII, No.4,p.91)

The Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo has for its goal the total transformation of our nature as well as the complete liberation of our being. But in our normal waking state we are conscious only of a very restricted field and action of our nature, the rest of it remaining and functioning behind the opaque veil of our surface personality. But, since all that we 'become and do and bear' in our outer life is prepared and governed by these concealed zones of activity subconscient and subliminal to our waking awareness, it assumes an "immense importance for a yoga which aims at the transformation of life to grow conscious of what goes on within these domains, to be master there and be able to feel, know and deal with the secret forces that determine our destiny and our internal and external growth or decline."

Now, as we have noted before, sleep like yogic trance opens the gate to these subliminal worlds and allows us an entry into the more significant realms of our existence. And although it is a fact that in the ordinary undeveloped state of our consciousness most of our sleep-experience remains unknown to our cognition and even the little that manages to reach our recording surface does so in the form of dreams and dream figures and "not in that

condition which might be called an inner waking and which is the most accessible form of the trance state," through a proper and methodical self-disciplining we may grow in consciousness in sleep itself so much so that in the end we may follow in uninterrupted awareness our passage through various realms of our inner being and the return journey therefrom. " At a certain pitch of this inner wakefulness this kind of sleep, *a sleep of experience* can replace the ordinary subconscious slumber."

It is then that we have veridical dreams, dream-experiences of great value, conveying truths that are not so easy to get in our ordinary waking state. Thus problems are solved in our dream consciousness, which our waking consciousness could not possibly cope with; we are provide with warnings and premonitions and indications of the future and with "records of happenings seen or experienced by us on other planes of our own being or of universal being into which we enter."

Our sleep-existence, if we are conscious in it, renders us another valuable service in the exploration of our subconscient nature that contains much that is obscure in us but not distinguishably active in the waking state. A conscious pursuit of the subconscient wanderings of our sleep-consciousness brings to our notice a class of dreams that "arise from the revenge of our inner being freed for a moment from the constraint that we impose on it. These dreams often allow us to perceive some of the tendencies, tastes, impulses and desires of which we would not otherwise be conscious so long as our will to realise our ideal held them down, hidden in some obscure recess of our being." For it is one of the most disconcerting discoveries made in Sadhana that what we have thought to have settled and done away with in the upper layers of our consciousness are obstinately retained by our glutinous subconscient. And just for that reason, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out, these dreams provide us with a useful indication, for "they enable us to pursue things to their obscure roots in this underworld and excise them."

Hence we see that the fields of our sleep if properly cultivated can yield us a great and effective aid on our road towards self-knowledge and self-mastery, also in the pursuit of our nature-transformation. But how to acquire a cognition of the activities of our nights? How to transform the nature of our sleep?

The procedure to deal with sleep and the dreamland may be said to have three main limbs: (i) how best to enter the state of sleep? (ii) how to remain conscious in sleep itself? and (iii) how to retain the memory of our dream-experiences even when we come back to the waking awareness?

In our quest for the answers to this triple query, to whom else would we turn than to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the supreme masters of the fourfold worlds of our being, *jāgrat, svapna, susupti* and *turiya*? So we make no apology for quoting in *extenso* from their luminous writings in an attempt to offer some hints to aspiring seekers.

How Best to Enter the State of Sleep?

"You must lie flat on your back and relax all the muscles and nerves....to be like what I call a piece of cloth on the bed, nothing else remains. If you can do that with the mind also, you get rid of all stupid dreams that make you more tired when you get up than when you went to bed. It is the cellular activity of the brain that continues without control, and that tires much. Therefore *a total relaxation,*a kind of *complete calm, without tension* in which everything is stopped. But this is only the beginning.

"Afterwards, a self-giving as total as possible, of all, from top to bottom, from the outside to the inmost, and an eradication also as total as possible of all resistance of the ego, and you begin repeating your mantra — your mantra, if you have one or any other word which has power over you, a word leaping from the heart, spontaneously, like a prayer and that sums up your aspiration. After having repeated a few times, if you are accustomed to it, you *get into trance.*And from that trance you pass

into sleep. The trance lasts as long as it should and quite naturally, spontaneously you pass into sleep. But when you come back from this sleep, you remember everything, *the sleep was but a continuation of the trance.*

"Fundamentally the sole purpose of sleep is to enable the body to assimilate the effect of the trance so that the effect may be accepted everywhere, to enable the body to do its natural function of the night and eliminate the toxins. And when it wakes up, there is no trace of heaviness which come from sleep, the effect of the trance continues.

"Even for those who have never been in trance, it is good to repeat a mantra, a word, a prayer before going into steep. But there must be a life in the words, I do not mean an intellectual signification, nothing of that kind, but *a vibration.*And on the body its effect is extraordinary: it begins to vibrate, vibrate, vibrate...and quietly you let yourself go as though you wanted to get into sleep. The body vibrates more and more and still more and away you go."

How to Retain the Awareness of Dreams?

The first part of this discipline should naturally deal with the question how to recognise our dreams and, above all, to distinguish between them; for as we have noted before, they vary greatly in their nature and quality. Often in the same night we may have several dreams which belong to different categories and thus have different intrinsic value. Now, as regards the procedure which we should adopt to retain the memory of our nights. Let us listen to the words of the Mother:

"....There is almost always a considerable divergence between what our mental activity actually is and the way in which we perceive it, and especially the way in which we remain conscious of it. In its own sphere, this activity determines what vibrations are to be transmitted by repercussion up to the cellular system of our cerebral organ, but in our sleepy brain, the subtle vibrations from the supersensible domain can only affect a very

limited number of cells; the inertia of most of the organic supports of cerebral phenomena reduces the number of their active elements, impoverishes the mental synthesis and makes it unfit to reproduce the activity of the internal states other than *by images*, oftenest very vague and inappropriate....

"The cerebral rendering of the activities of the night is at times so much distorted that a form is given to phenomena which is *the exact opposite of the reality...*

"[But] if one knows how to translate in intellectual language the more of less inadequate images by which the brain reproduces these facts, one may learn many things which the too limited physical faculties do not permit us to perceive.

"Some even succeed, by a special culture and training, in acquiring and retaining the consciousness of the deeper activities of their inner being *independently of their cerebral transcription* and are able to recall and know them in the waking state in all the plenitude of their faculties...

"How [then] to cultivate this field of action? how to acquire a *cognition o our activities of the night?...*

"The same *discipline of concentration* which enables a man no longer to remain a stranger to his inner activities in the waking state, also furnishes him with the means of removing the ignorance of those, still richer, of the diverse states of sleep.

"Usually these activities leave only rare and confused memories behind them.

"One finds however that at times a fortuitous circumstance, an impression received, a word pronounced is enough to *reawaken suddenly to consciousness the whole of a long dream* of which the moment before there was no recollection.

"From this simple fact we may infer that our conscious activity participates very feeble in the phenomena of the sleeping state, as in the normal state of things they would remain *lost for ever in subconscient memory...*

"One who wishes to recover the memory of a forgotten dream should in the first place fix his attention on such vague impressions as the dream might have left trailing behind it and follow the indistinct traces as far as possible.

"This regular exercise would let him go farther every day *towards the obscure retreat of the suconscient* where the forgotten phenomena of sleep take refuge and thus ark out a route easy to follow between the two domains of consciousness.

"One practical remark to be made from this point of view is that the absence of memory is very often due to *abruptness* with which the return to consciousness takes place. At this moment, in fact, new activities break into the field of consciousness, drive out forcible all that is foreign to them and afterwards make more difficult the work of concentration necessary to recall the things thus expelled. This is facilitated, on the contrary, whenever certain mental and even physical precautions are observed for a peaceful transition from one state to another."

Thus, the slipping away of the memory of our nights can be greatly remedied and a power developed of going back in memory from dream to dream, from state to state, till a sufficiently coherent knowledge of our sleep life is built up.

But this training of the faculties of memory, as we shall presently see, does not prove sufficient to link the totality of our sleep-existence with our waking awareness. For that we have to grow conscious in the state of sleep itself.

How to Grow Conscious in Sleep

The training of our physical memory to follow back the thread of our dream-activities fails to give its full dividend for the simple reason that in this way we are "able to transform into conscious phenomena of the waking state those alone which were already so, be it most fleetingly, during sleep. For *where there was no consciousness, there can be no memory.*

We should therefore seek, in the second place, to extend the participation of consciousness to a greater number of activities in the sleeping state. Now, "the daily habit of going with interest over the various dreams of the night, this transforming their vestiges little by little into precise memories as well as that of noting them down on waking are very helpful from this point of view.

"By virtue of these habits, the mental faculties will be induced to adapt their mechanism to the phenomena of this order and to direct upon them their attention, curiosity and power of analysis.

"It will then produce a sort of *intellectualisation of dream,*achieving the double result of interspersing the conscious activities more and more intimately in the play, hitherto disordered, of the activities of the sleeping state and of augmenting progressively the scope of these activities by making them more and more rational and instructive.

"Dreams would then take on the character of precise visions and, at times, of dream revelations."

But along with this participation of mental consciousness, this revelatory intellectualisation of dreams, we must try to cultivate a still higher and deeper mode of consciousness in sleep. In fact, our sleep-life should be as much a part of Sadhana as the waking one, and the developing consciousness that we attain in our waking state through spiritual endeavor and aspiration should extend itself fully and continuously also to the sleep state. It is true that at the beginning and for a long time it becomes difficult to maintain the consciousness at the same pitch at night, for "the true consciousness comes at first in the waking state or in meditation, it takes possession of the mental, the vital, the conscious physical, but the subconscious vital and physical remain obscure and this obscurity comes up when there is sleep or an inert relaxation." But with the growth of an intense Sadhana in our waking state, when we develop our inner being, live from in

without and our subconscient is enlightened and penetrated by the Mother's light, this disparity and this dislocation of consciousness disappears, and our "sadhana goes on in the dream or sleep state as well as in the waking."

The Lure of the Dream-Consciousness

At this point of our discussion we would like to address a note of warning to the seekers after the mastery of their nights.

Through a proper cultivation of the fields of sleep-existence, when the inner sleep consciousness begins to develop and along with it appear dream experiences as distinct from ordinary dreams, there is often an irresistible pull on the consciousness to withdraw from its waking status, go within and follow the development there even when there is no fatigue or need of sleep — so alluring are the experiences of dream-consciousness, so overwhelming is the charm thereof!

But this attraction of the sleep-world must not be allowed to encroach on the waking hours and the "wanting to get back to something interesting and enthralling which accompanies the desire to fall into sleep" should be effectively curbed. Otherwise there may be an undesirable unbalancing and "a decrease of the hold on outer realities."

Chapter-10

The Vision of the Divine Body

Chapter-10

The Light now distant shall grow native here,
The Strenght that visits us our comrade power;
The Ineffable shall find a secret voice,
The Imperishable burn through Matter's screen
Making this mortal body godhead's robe

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*,Book II, Canto II,p.110)

Past and gone are three mortal generations: the fourth and last into the Sun will enter.

(*Rig-Veda,*VIII. 102. 14)

If the transformation of the body is complete, that means no subjection to death — it does not mean that one will be bound to keep the same body for all time. One creates a new body for oneself when one wants to change...

(Sri Aurobindo, *Letters on Yoga*,p.11)

The Integral Yoga of Self-Transformation as revealed to man by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has for its aim, in contradistinction to the attempts mentioned in the foregoing chapter, the creation of a divine body, here in the conditions of earth and matter. It does not want to be contented with a cinmayadeha,or transcendental body, as in the case of the Vaishnavas, nor with the possession of a post-mortem 'pneumatic' body of Pauline conception.

For, this Yoga aims not at a release from embodied existence (as even the Tantra and Vaishnavism do at the end), at a departure out of the world into some supraterrestrial world of bliss and spiritual enjoyment, but at a change of earthly life and existence, at a divine fulfilment of life here upon earth, and that,

and that too "not as something subordinate of incidenta', but as a distinct and central object". Also, "the object sought after [in this Yoga] is not an individual achievement of divine realisation for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness here."

Now, in this framework of the goal of a divine fulfilment of terrestrial life, the importance of the body is indeed obvious. For, as Sri Aurobindo himself has decared:

"A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation, unless its action and functioning attain to a supreme capacity" and "the physical consciousness, and physical being, the itself...be suffused with a light and beauty and bliss from the Beyond and the life divine assume a body divine."

Elsewhere Sri Aurobindo sounds a note of warning: "It is because he has developed of been given a body and brain capable of receiving and serving a progressive mental illumuination that man has risen above the animal. Equally, it can only be by developing a body or at least a functioning of the physical instrument capable of receiving and serving a still higher illumination that he will rise above himself and realise, not merely in thought and in his internal being but in life, a perfectly divine manhood. Otherwise either the promise of Life is cancelled, its meaning annulled and earthly being can only realise Sachchidananda by abolishing itself, by shedding from it mind, life and body and returning to the pure Infinite, of else man is not the divine instrument, there is a destined limit to the consciously progressive power which distinguishes him from all other terrestrial existences and as he has replaced them in the front of things, so another must eventually replace him and assume his heritage."

But fortunately for earth-life and for man neither of these

altenatives need be envisaged. For man has convincingly shown by his past achievement that he is capable in all parts of his being of exceeding *ad infinitum* the bounds of his actuality. Thus there is no inevitability of logic why he himself should not at the glorious prospect of divine manhood, by opering all his members, — his mentality, his life, and, the last but not the least, his body itself, — to the unveiled action of the Supermind and allowing them to be integrally moulded and transfigured by that 'greater term of the Spirit manifesting in Nature.'

For, it should be clearly borne in mind that the divine body thus envisaged can come into existence and its physical immortality be achieved and assured, not through the paltry efforts made by science, nor through the occult-spiritural influences that seek to act upon Mtter through the sole agency of the powers of consciousness so far organised in earth-nature, but through the action of the Supramental Power, the power of "the fall Truth-Consciousness of the Divine Nature". This Truth-Consciousness, *rta-cit*,the Supermin as Sri Aurobindo terms it, is "a dynamic and not only a static Power, not only a Knowledge, but a Will according to Knowledge," that can "manifest direct its world of Light and Truth in which all is luminously based on the harmony and unity of the One, not disturbed by a veil of Ignorance".

Also, when this Supramental Power overtly intervenes in the field of body and Matter, its working will be "not an influence on the physical giving it abnormal faculties, but an entrance and penetration changing it wholly into a supramentalised physical".

Now, as regards the nature and character of this supramentalised physical making possible the appearance, here upon earth itself, of a wholly transfigured divine body, Sri Aurobindo has written in great detail in the penultimate chapter of *The Life Divine* and, more exhaustively, in his last work *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth.*

The limited span of the present work does not permit us to discuss in full the nature of this apotheosis of the material body of man, as envisaged in the Yoga-Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, nor can we indicate how for and in what way the

insistent problems of food and sleep, fatigue and inertia, disease and decay, unregenerated impulses and appetites are going to be solved in the transformed divine body to appear in time. We content ourselves with picking up here one theme, *the* theme, we might as well say, of the Sphinx-like problem of death sn dissolution of the individual's physical body.

For, we have been assured by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that as a crowning achievement of the Supramental Manifestotion upon Earth, there will come will come about 'the physical conquest of death, an earthly immortality', — "in the sense not of attachment or of restriction to our present corporeal frame but an exceeding of the law of the physical body." For, "from the divine Bliss, the original Delight of existence,the Lord of Immortality comes pouring the wine of that Bliss, the mystic Soma, into there jars of mentalised living matter; eternal and beautiful, he enters into these sheaths of substance for the integral transformation of the being and nature".

And thus will be realised for man his age-old yearning, "the consummation of a triple immortality, — immortality of the nature completing the essential immortality of the Spirit and the psychic survival of death," — which will be "the crown of rebirth and a momentous indication of the conquest of the material inconscience and Ignorance even in the very foundation of the reign of Matter, ... a temporal sign of the spirit's victory here over Death and Matter".

But before this vision of the conquest of Death, can be realised in the life of man, the metaphysical necessity for its existence and away so far has to be adequately met and abrogated.

So our task now is to proceed to the study of the metaphysics of death and indicate the condition necessary for the attainment of a physical immortality.

Chapter-11

The Conquest of Sleep

Chapter-11

Thine is the shade in which visions are made;
sped by thy hands from celestial lands
come the souls that rejoice for ever.
Into thy dream-worlds we pass or look in thy magic glass,
then beyond thee we climb out of Space and Time
to the peak of divine endeavour.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. II,p.122)

He has seen God's slumber shape these magic worlds.
He has watched the dumb God fashioning Matter's frame,
Dreaming the dreams of its unknowing sleep,
And watched the unconscious Force that built the stars.
He has learnt the Inconscient's workings and its law...
Its somnolence founded the universe,
Its obscure waking makes the world seem vain...
He must call light into its dsrk abysms,
Else never can Truth conquer Matter's sleep
And all earth look into the eyes of God.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto II, pp. 449-50)

We have seen in the course of our study of *longue haleine* on the occult nature and function of sleep that the periodic spells of dormancy of our body *need not* prove to be an unavoidable evil nor a handicap to our spiritual growth. In any case, our physical sleep does not *necessarily* mean an abeyance of consciousness of the whole of our dynamic being, nor a nightly falling down, nor even an interruption in the pursuit of our Sadhana. On the other hand, this may be transformed, if we know how to do it, into a *sleep of experiences* giving us an access to the inner domains of our being.

But whatever may be the value of the sleep-existence, to live in the dream-world at the price of the suspension of our waking awareness cannot be considered a laudable achievement in the Yoga of Transformation of Life. We have to bring out and call down the reaches from our subliminal depths and superconscient height and make these an acquisition of our waking life. Our physical consciousness has to be "spiriturally awake" and "as open in the waking consciousness as in sleep." We have some how to "arrive at a point when one remains outwardly conscious and yet lives in the inner being and has at will the indrawn or the outpoured condition."

It is thus evident that the irresistible bouts of unconsciousness of sleep to which our body's waking status occasionally succumbs cannot but be viewed as a sign of imperfection in the prevailing organisation of our physical being. What is then necessary is that — and this must constitute an essential element in the total transfiguration of our bodily existence — *sleep mist be raised from the level of necessity to that of a free acceptance,* as and when so willed, as an indrawn absorption of our consciousness.

Thus the mastery over our nights should be followed by the attempt at an absolute conquest of sleep. But is this total victory over physical sleep at all feasible in the present human body? And, if not, what are the essential conditions that have to be met before this prospect for bodily life enters the field of realisable possibilities?

By way of answering these crucial questions we propose to put forward two related problems and venture some tentative solutions thereof.

How to Reduce the Hours of Sleep?

On the purely physical-vital plane, sleep has for its essential function the restoration of the nervous physical energies of our fatigued bodily system. But for an effective fulfilment of this function, it is absolutely necessary that our sleep-life should be calm and reposeful, relaxed and luminous. But very rarely do our nights measure up to this criterion: these are, more often than not, more fatiguing than even our days for reasons which often escape us.

But the Mother has warned us that if we get up not so well refreshed in the morning, it is because of a formidable mass of Tamas. "It is Tamas which causes bad sleep. There are two kinds of bad sleep: the sleep that makes you heave, dull, as though you lose all the effect of the effort you put in during the preceding day; and the sleep that exhausts you as if you were passing your time in fight.

"...Two things you must eliminate: falling into the torpor of the inconscience, with all these things of the subconscient and of the inconscient that rise up, invade you, enter into you; and a vital and mental superactivity where you pass your time in fighting literally terrible battles. People come out of that state bruised, as if they had received blows — and they did receive them, it is not 'as if'!"

(A) Relaxation: Now, since the total time interval needed for the recuperation of our energies is in inverse ratio to the quality of repose that we attain in our sleep, the very first procedure we must adopt to cut down the duration of our nightly sleep is to practise the art of complete relaxation of body and mind, a short period of which proving to be more refreshing than hours of restless sleep. In the recommendation of a Buddhist author: "Relax each portion of the body deliberately and consciously; then close the eyes and try to visualise utter darkness. Feel yourself floating in a silent void, and deliberately empty the mind of every thought and feeling by imagining such a condition as Swinburnes's "Only a sleep eternal in an eternal night." And the author concludes that, once the proper knack is abundance of fresh energy and a clean-swept invigorated mind.

Be that as it may, this negative method of relaxation cannot take us very far on our road to the conquest of sleep. It should

from rather the essential preliminary step to a for more effective and spiritually beneficial one: to become conscious in our sleep and deliberately utilise our nights for progress.

(B) Conscious utilisation of nights: At this point we would like to dispel a possible misunderstanding that may arise in connection with this suggestion for a conscious utilisation of our nights. There may be a lurking fear in some minds that this attempt at the cultivation of the vast fields of our nights, instead of bringing in a more reposeful and therefore a more invigorating, sleep would on the other hand affect its depth and detract from the efficacity of our nightly rest which is so salutary and indispensable for our physical health.

But this fear and doubt have got no basis in fact. For, as the Mother has assured us, it is only the useless and uncontrollable and mostly subconscious activities in our sleep that make our nights more fatiguing than the day. On the contrary, "if our night granted us the acquisition of new knowledge, the solution of an absorbing problem, the establishment of contact in our inner being with some centre of life or of light, or even the accomplishment of some useful work, we should always get up with a feeling of vigour and well-being. It is the *hours wasted in doing nothing useful of good that are the most fatiguing*."

This conscious cultivation of our sleep-existence for reaping fruits for our inner growth is then the second essential element of our endeavour to make the state of physical sleep a real restorer of our energies.

But the gain acquired even in this way seems to be limited in its scope so far as our main problem of drastically reducing the hours of sleep is concerned. For that we have to become conscious masters of another significant phenomenon of our sleep-life: the possibility of entrance into the "*susupti* of Brahman of Brahmaloka."

(C) Attainment of Sachchidananda immobility: Once before we have already made a passing reference to this state of luminous rest in sleep. As a matter of fact, for sleep to be at all worth the name fulfilling its role of the restorer of energies, it must be either one "in which there is a luminous silence" or else one "in which there is Ananda in the cells." The rest of our sleep-life is an *attempt at sleep, not sleep* itself. To quote from the Mother a passage to which we have already referred:

"There is the possibility of a sleep in which you enter into an absolute silence, immobility and peace in all parts of your being and your consciousness merges into Sachchidananda. You can hardly call it sleep for it is extremely conscious. In that condition you may remain for a few minutes, but these *few minutes give you more rest and refreshment than hours of ordinary sleep.*"

Sri Aurobindo too has treated this topic on numerous occasions. Thus, to quote from him only one passage:

"In sleep one...passes from consciousness to deeper consciousness in a long succession until one reaches the psychic and rests there of else from higher to higher consciousness until one reaches rest in some silence and peace. *The few minutes one passes in this rest are the real sleep* which restores, — if one does not get it, there is only a half rest."

But, as a matter of fact, this brief Sachchidananda period of "luminous and peaceful dreamless rest" that "gives sleep all its restorative value" cannot be had "by chance; it requires a long training." Indeed, our ordinary sleep, even when it is of the best variety, is mostly taken up with our actual *travelling* towards this state of Sachchidananda immobility and our return journey to the waking awareness, without very often ever reaching the state at all.

And even if we reach this state on some rare occasions, "it is done unconsciously as it is. If one wants to do it consciously and regulate it, one has first to become conscious in sleep." And then alone can the prospect possibly open up before us of reducing the hours of sleep to a bare minimum.

But even this cannot altogether eliminate the necessity of sleep. The reason is twofold, physiological and occult-spiritual, to whose consideration we now turn.

How to Eliminate the Necessity of Sleep?

Physical precondition: On the purely physico-physiological plane, since sleep is the body's unavoidable response to its overstrain and exhaustion through an ill-balanced expenditure of energy, what is needed is the total annulment of all possibility of our body's fatigue. And this brings us to the general problem of incapacity and inertia of our present physical organisation. For, although it is a fact that "either the yogic or the vital energy can long keep at work an overstrained or declining physical system, a time comes when this drawing is no longer so easy nor perhaps possible" and the bad results long held back from manifesting explode all at once and a breakdown ensues.

So the problem of incapacity has to be tackled and soved on the plane of the body itself. For "the body is the key, the body the secret both of bondage and of release, of animal weakness and of divine power, of the obscuration of the mind and soul and of their illumination, of subjection to pain and limitation and of selfmastery, of death and of immortality."

But what is the inherent reason for this fatigue of our body? Why does our physical system get periodically tired? Why can it not work in a continuous way?

In the words of the Mother:" The fatigue of the body comes from an inner disharmony. There may be many other *apparent reasons,* but all amount to that fundamental circumstance."

What is this want of harmony due to? The answer lies in the fact of a limited life-force, lodged in the confines of a limited and egobound individualised existence, contending in vain with the universal All-Life and All-Force that seeks constantly to govern and master it. In the evolutionary emergence and development

of life in material forms, it is true that as consciousness develops more and more, "as the light of its own being emerges from the enert darkness of the involutionary sleep, the individual existence becomes dimly aware of the power in it and seeks ferst nervously and then mentally to master, use and enjoy the play."[4] But, even at our best, we mental beings are bound are bound by a poor and limited life power which is all that our body can bear or to which it can give scope. And" in the consequent interchange and balancing between the movement and interaction of the vital energies normally at work in the body and their interchange with those which act upon it from outside, whether the energies of others or the general Pranic force variously active in the environment, there is a constant precarious balancing and adjustment which may at any moment go wrong."[5]

Thus, in the very nature of things, our individualised life and force in the body cannot master the All-Force working in the world. On the contrary, the resistance which it offers through blind ignorance to the movement of the infinite universal Life "with whose total will and trend its own will and trend may not immediately agree",[1] subjects it to the law of incapacity and fatigue, one of the basic characteristics of individualised and divided Life in the body.

Hence to cure our physical system of all liability to fatigue, the limitation of ego has to be totally abrogated not only in the inner parts of our being, but in the very physical consciousness and the material organisation of the body. Our body has to be brought into complete harmony with the demands of our own inner consciousness and with the infinite cosmic rhythm.

But "that means", in the words of the Mother, " a work in each cell of the body, in each small activity, in each movement of the organs... You have to enter into the disposition of the cells, your inner physical organisation if the body is to answer to the Force that descend.. You must be conscious of your physical cells, you must know their different functions, the degrees of

receptivity in each, which of them are in good condition and which are not."

But this cannot be attempted with the help of the insufficient and inefficient light of mind-consciousness. It is only through the descend and concomitant emergence of the divine Gnosis, Supermind, here in the midst of the evolutionary Becoming, that Matter and material body can be rid of their inertia and inconscience and a proper equation established between he life-energy playing in an individual formation and the surges of the embarking All-Force. For in the Supermind "alone is the conscious unity of all diversities; there alone will and knowledge are equal and in perfect harmony; there alone Consciousness and Force arrive at their divine equation."

It is through the supramental transformation of our physical body,—that "is still a flower of the material Inconscience."[4]—down to its very cells and functioning that the law of incapacity and consequent fatigue will be finally abrogated and with it the physiological compulsion for sleep.

But there remains a final hurdle, the occult-spiritual necessity of sleep, but that too will be completely annulled with the gnostic transformation of our waking existence.

Occult-spiritual precondition: We have seen that in its essential nature our body's sleep is the response to the demand of the individual consciousness to go inward and awake in planes of existence not at present accessible to the waking awareness which is still in the grip of an involutionary half-sleep. So, unless and until his spiritual slumber is totally eliminated from all parts of the being including our very physical consciousness, mother Nature will constrainour body to fall occasionally into the swoon of slumber so that the portals of the inner and higher life can open.

Now, when Supermind or Gnosis, the Truth-Consciousness of Sachchidananda, overtly emerges in the field of evolution to

become the governing principle of our embodied material existence, the manifested being will be in secure possession of an integral Consciousness and an integral Sight, so that there will be no more a state of sleep in opposition to the state of permanent waking, nor for that matter a line of demarcation separating the inner and outer domains of existence. The evolving being will then be fully aroused from the self-oblivion of an involutionary sleep and, along with it, the spiritual compulsion behind the sleep of our body will altogether lose its occult support.

In that foresble Golden Dawn, the body will thrill with the fulfilment of its destiny, it will participate in full awareness in the glories of a divinised life upon earth and the law of the inexorable necessity of sleep will be for ever lifted from its head.

But in the meantime let us not forget even for a moment the great role that sleep can play in the present organisation of our life and being; for, does it not open to us the doors of the dreamland, the Yogic dream-world, if we only know how to put it to service?

And who can be little the infinite charm and beauty and bliss that the Mother of Dreams may bestow upon us, if we only know how to court Her favour?

APPENDIX

THE MOTHER OF DREAMS*

SRI AUROBINDO

Goddess supreme, Mother of Dream, by the ivory doors when
thou standest,
Who are they then that come down unto men in thy visions
that
troop, group upon group, down the path of the shadows
slanting?
Dream after dream, they flash and they gleam with the flame
of
the stars still around them;
Shadows at the side in a darkness ride where the wild fires
dance,
stars glow and glance and the radom meteor glistens;
there are voies hat cry to their kin who reply; voices sweet,
at heart they beat and ravish the soul as it listens.
What then are these lands and these golden sands and these
seas
more radiant than earth can imagine?
Who are those that pace by the purple waves that race to the
cliff-bound floor of thy jasper shore under skies in which
mystery muses,
Lapped in moonlight not of our night or plunged in sun shine
that
is not diurnal?
Who are they coming they Oceans roaming with sails whose
strands
are not made by hands, an unearthly wind advances?
Why do they join in a mystic line with those on the sands
linking
hands in strange and stately dances?
Thou in the air, with a flame in thy hair, the whirl of thy
wonders
watching,

* Sri Aurobindo, Collected Poems (centenary Edition), Vol.-5, pp. 67-68

Holdest the night in thy ancient right, Mother divine,
hyacinthine,
with a girdle of beauty defended.
Sworded with fire, attracting desire, thy tine bours kingdom
thou keepest,
Starry-sweet, with the moon at thy feet, now hidden now
seen
the clouds between the gloom and the drift of thy tresses.
Only to those whom thy fancy chose, O thou heart-free is it
given to see thy wetch craft and fell they caresses.
Open the gate where thy children wait in their world of a
beauty
undarkened.
High-throned on a cloud, victorious, proud I have espied
Maghavan ride when the armies of wind are behind him;

Food has been given for my tasting from heaven and fruit of
immortal sweetness;
I have drunk wine of the kingdoms divine and have heard the
change of music strange from a lyre which our hands cannot
master;
Doors have swung wide in the chambers of pride where the
Gods reside and the Apsaras dance in their circles faster and
faster.
For thou art she whom we first can see when we pass the
bounds of the mortal,
There at the gates of the heavenly states thou hast planted
thy wand enchanted over the head of the Yogin waving.
From thee are the dream and the shadows that seem and
the fugitive lights that delude us;
Thine is the shade in which visions are made; sped by
thy hands from celestial lands come the souls that rejoice for
ever.
Into thy dream-worlds we pass or look in thy magic
glass, then beyond thee we climb out of Space and Time to
the peak of divine endeavour.

Chapter-12

Attempts at 'Kayasiddhi' and Rejuvenation

Chapter-12

Then man was born among the monstrous stars
Dowered with a mind and heart to conquer thee.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri,* Book IX, Canto II, p. 594)

The Ars magna, *that royal and sacerdotal science of the alchemists, is verily a science of regeneration... Many a seeker on the ways of the Divine has undergone spiritual regeneration. But very few are they who have known the mystery of corporal renewal.*

*(*D.Eckhartshausen, La Nuee sure Le Sanctuaire)

Senescence and natural death, '*la mort naturelle*', are thus seen to be not at all necessary and intrinsic attributes or accompaniments of incarnate life. Hence have arisen on the part of man various deliberately planned attempts at the physical and practised in the modern West, — this battle for the victory over senile decay and the body's death is no longer considered to be farcical and futile, but rather as a veritable scientific problem and proposition. Already in the year 1924, S. Metalnikov of the Institute Pasteur (Paris) wrote: "All efforts of the biologist and medical men to wage a successful battle against the onset of senescence and restore youth to the aged and decadent ought to be considered as practically possible and scientifically motivated *(prejudgement possibles et scientifiquement motivees)*"

Here we may briefly state them a in attempts, both scientific and occult-spiritual, that have been so far made for the physical conquest of death.

(A) *Rejuvenation Procedures:* Indeed, in recent years, science has proceeded in right earnest to tackle the problem of aging and death, starting from the lower end of the range of our being.

It has sought to formulate theories, and act effectively, on the underlying physico-chemical factors and processes that govern the phenomenon of progressive senescence of the body-locked soma-cells and have for their ultimate and inexorable consequence the somatic death of the individual organism. In our time much valuable work has been ne in this specialized field of biology and the interested reader may consult appropriate publications for relevant information.

In brief, we may state that many are the theories that have been put forward to explain the onset of the phenomenon of senescence (e.g., those of Maupas, Hertwig, Mainot, Koltzoff, Metchnikof, Weissmann and others), and numerous have been the attempts to achieve rejuvenation of the aging body and lengthen the span of life[1] by various surgical alterations of certained endocrinal organs, particularly the essential organs of sex.

Indeed, it has often been thought that aging is brought about by the failure of one or other of the endocrine glans and attempts have been made to rejuvenate an aging body by grafting to it appropriate glands or injecting into it glandular extracts.

But, from the fundamental point of view, these have by no means solved the problem at its base. For, on the one hand, no theory of sineil decline so far put forward can be regarded as entirely satisfactory or as generally established by the evidence. Also, "most of them suffer from the logocial defect of setting up some particular observed attribute or element of the phenomenon of senescence itself, such as protoplasmic hysteresis, slowing rate of metabolism (meaning essentially only reduced activity), etc as the cause of the whole".

One the other hand, whatever may have been the immediate physical and psychological effects of the procedures of rejunvenation, these have proved to be no more than temporary heightening of some gland activities, altogether "transient results" as one distinguished biologist has termed them. There is as yet

no evidence whatsoever that these medico-scientific procedures help to increase in any way the basic potential specific longevity of the individual. In the words of Prof. Vernon T. Schuhardt, an authority in the field:

> "Although loudly proclaimed, these procedures were not well founded in theory and have not with stood the exacting the critical tests of time and confirmation. No evidence has been discovered that a the aging the body *as a whole* is dependent on either the activity or the failure o the sexual glands, *per se* . . . The effects were temporary and did not offset the slow decline of old age. Indeed, some danger is involved in such a one-sided stimulation of the senile since the organism as a whole may not be physically constituted to withstand the sudden and abnormal stress... The hormones may alter the background of physiological reactions and modify that structural integrity of the cells and tissue, but they have *little lasting effect on the primary causes of aging the senility*... Thus while the germinal elements become the source of posterity, the body seems predestined to weaken, grow old and die. And by the latter 1950's nomeans have been found to seriously alter this decline."

So we see that the scientific attempts at preventing devitalisation and prolonging the individual life-span of man have so far proved futile and illusive, and we on our part venture to assert that these will prove equally so even in the future; for, the root of the malady lies somewhere else and is too deep and inscrutable for science to probe or to find the remedy thereof. To anticipate the line of suggested solution, we may state forthwith that "even if Science -physcial Science or occult Science—were to discover the necessary conditions or means for an indefinite survival of the body, still, if the body could not adapt itself so as to become a fit instrument of expression for the inner growth, the soul would find some way to abandon it and pass on to a new incarnation. *The material or physical* causes of death are not its sole or its true cause; its true inmost reason is the spiritual

necessity for the evolution of a new being."

(B) *Kāyāsiddhi procedures:* Leaving behind the field of scientific achievements as well as failures,we pass onnow to a surrmary consideration of some of the attempts made by man, starting from the other, the higher, end of the range of our being.

These occult-spiritual attempts at *dehasiddhi*, the attainment of perfection of the material body of man, have in the majority of cases come down to us in the form of traditions and a lore whose sources sometimes have been lost in the obscure and remote past of the race.

Thus, in the words of the Mother, "in a very ancient tradition, preceding even the Vedi and Chaldean traditions, there was already the question of a glorious body which would be plastic enough to be constantly remodelled by the deeper consciousness, a body expressing this consciousness. There was the question of luminosity: the matter constituting the body being able to become luminous at will. There was the question of a kind of lightness being possible which would enable the body to move about in the air by mere will-force and some procedure of handling the inner energy on so on."

Some Buddhist traditions speak of the Buddha's temporary victory over death, *Mrtyumāra.* These are based on a Buddhist belief that ust as an *arhat* can abandon the 'coefficients of life,' so he can also stop them (*sthāpayati).* "According to the Vaibhasikas, the saint says: 'May [the action that is to ripen for me in enjoyment ripening life!' By its nature, life is 'ripening' (*vipāka),* and it can replace any enjoyment which normally ought to ripen from a former merit, and which the saint no longer desires and has escaped by his sainthood. By this process, 'vanquishing death', the Buddha prolonged his life three months for the salvation of men, and the disciples employ this to assure the duration of the *dhamma* . This term of three months seems to be given as a maximum, ad as the mark of the victory of the Buddha over *Mrtyumāra,* 'Mara, who is death'."[1]

This question of a possible maximum limit to the postponement of death is very significant and highly germane to the problem we have been discussing. For, although there have been in the past "seemingly allied ideas and anticipation—the perfectibility of the race, certain Tantric sadhanas, the fort after a complete physical siddhi by certain schools of yoga, " these have been attempted for the most part as indiviudal personal achievements, imperfect and precariously maintained by the help of Yogasiddhis, and not as a *dharma,* natural law, of the transformed physcial nature. But "mental or vital occult power", warns Sri Aurobindo, "can only bring siddhis of the higher plane into the indiviudal life— like the Sannyasi who could take any poison without harm, but he *died of a* poison after all when he forgot too observe the conditions of the siddhi."

Among the various attempts in the past falling into this category, mention may be made of:

(i) attempts at *dehasiddhi* through *kālabañcana,* conquest of Time, by certain schools of Hathayoga;

(ii) attempts at the attainment of a *rasamayi tanu,* body with divinessence, by the Raseswara sect;

(iii) attempts at skandasiddhi made by certian Mahayani Tantric schools among the Buddhists;

(iv) attempts at *kāyāsiddhi* by Nathayogis like Matsyendra, Goraksha, Jalandharanath and others;

(v) attempts at the elaboration of a *bhāvadeha* by Sahajiya Vaishnavas.

But none of these attempted Siddhis became intrinsic to the material body and hence cold not be made to endure. As a matter of fact, as we shall see in the course of our study, "there can be no immortality of the body without supramentalisation; the potentiality is there in the yogic force and yogis can live for 200 or 300 years or more, but there can be no real principle of its without the supramental."[5]

Chapter-13

The Mystery of Life and Death

Chapter-13

Birth is the first spiritual mystery of the physical universe, death is the second which gives its double point of perplexity to the mystery of birth; for life, which would otherwise be a self-evident fact of existence, becomes itself a mystery by virtue of these two which seem to be its beginning and its end and yet in a thousand ways betray themselves as neither of these things, but rather intermediate stages in an occult processes of life.

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Life of Divine*, p.742)

Our mortality is only justified in the light of our immortality..

(*Ibid.*, p.681)

Immortal life breathe in that monstrous death.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Last Poems*, p.43)

Although Death walks beside us on Life's road,
A dim bystander at the body's start...
Other is the riddle of its ambiguous face:
Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,
A grey defeat pregnant with victory,
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book X, Canto I, pp.600-01)

To make a terror of death
Who smiling beckons us to farther life,
And is a bridge for the persistent breath,
[Is] born of folly...

(Sri Aurobindo, *More Poems*, p.18)

We now come to the question of questions, *prasnam uttamam*, the ultimate problem that all embodied life has to face:

What is the raison d'être of death, this cruel and monstrous jest played with immortal life by some mysterious necessity of things, or by some diabolical Power, as some in their exasperation would like to declare?

Nachiketas, the young aspirant of the Kathopanishad, asked Yama for the solution to this problem of death-Yama "the knower and keeper of the cosmic Law through which the soul has to rise by death and life to the freedom of Immortality." Even when asked by Yama, the Lord of Death: "Another boon choose, O Nachiketas; importune me not, nor urge me; this, this abandon," the seeking soul of Nachiketas stood firm and declared: "This of which they thus debate, O Death, declare to me, even that which is in the great passage; than this boon which enters in into the secret that is hidden from us, no other chooses Nachiketas."

And Gilgamesh of the ancient Babylonian lore, who set out on the quest after the Plant of Everlasting Life but failed in his attempt, raised the same insistent cry to the departed soul of Enkidu: "Tell me, my Friend, tell me, reveal to me, the mystery of death."

As the Mother has remarked: "Why is there death? This question has been put at least once in their life by all persons whose consciousness is awakened in the slightest degree. In the depth of each being there is such a need to prolong, develop, perpetuate life that contact with death produces a shock, a recoil; in some sensitive beings it produces horror, in others, indignation. One asks: 'What is this monstrous farce in which one has to take part without wishing for it or understanding it? Why to be born, if it is to die? Why all this effort for growth, for progress, for the development of faculties, if it is to arrive at an impoverishment and finally at decline and decomposition?' Some submit passively to a fate that seems inexorable, others revolt or, if they are less strong, despair."

While discussing the necessity and justification and the culmination and self-fulfilment of the process of death, we must at

the very outset try to get rid of a basic and besetting error of perspective that tends to vitiate a proper and unbiased evaluation of the phenomenon of death. For, if we can contemplate this sombre phenomenon, not from the limited and necessarily distorted angle of vision of the finite terror-struck ego-bound individual, but from the perspective of cosmic Becoming, we cannot fail to discover that death and dissolution is not such an unmitigated evil as it appears at first sight to be. As a matter of fact, *death as death has no separate or intrinsic reality: it is there solely to serve the purpose of life.* We can even go farther and state that death is a process and phase of life itself and that the latter, and by no means death, is the fundamental all-pervading truth of existence.

But what is Life, what are its criteria? Biological sciences know no definite answer to these questions. As a matter of fact, the more profoundly men of science have sought to probe the mystery of the essence of life, the more it has eluded their grasp, so much so that life at times appears to them to be immanently present everywhere, its overt manifestation depending upon some favourable conditions which alone Science can hope to study and specify. To modern biological thought there are no *universally valid* criteria of life. Baffled with the task of defining what a living organism is, biology seeks at times to proceed in a roundabout way, as in the following definition offered by Prof. George E. Hutchinson:

> "The necessary and sufficient condition for an object to be recognizable as a living organism, and so to be the subject of biological investigation, is that it a discreet mass of matter, with a definite boundary, undergoing continual interchange of material with its surroundings without manifest alteration of properties over short periods of time and, as ascertained either by direct observations or by analogy with other objects of the same class, originating by some process of division or fortification from one or two pre-existing objects of the same kind."

To cite a few observations reflecting the sense of biological predicament before the task of delimiting the field of Life and of Mind:

(i) "While there is little-difficulty in telling whether a higher organism is alive, there is no agreement as to what characteristics would be required for the most primitive organisms in order to call them living." (Prof. Stanley L.Miller.)

(ii) In recent years, the "study of viruses has become intensive, leading to a blurring of the conception of the 'vital' phenomena. It is still doubtful whether a virus can be described as living and, indeed, as to what we mean by living." (Prof. Charles Singer)

In fact, as the faint glimmerings of recent scientific research suggest and spriritual experience and vision certify, "Life reveals itself as essentially the same everywhere from the atom to man, the atom containing the subconscious stuff and movement of being which are released into consciousness in the animal, with plant life as a midway stage in the evolution. Life is really a universal operation of Conscious-Force acting subconsciously on and in Matter; it is the operation that creates, maintains, destroys and re-creates forms or bodies and attempts by play of nerve-force, that is to say, by currents of interchange of stimulating energy to awake conscious sensation in those bodies. In this operation there are three stages; the lowest is that in which the vibration is still in the sleep of Matter entirely subconscious so as to seem wholly mechanical; the middle stage is that in which it becomes capable of a response still submental but on the verge of what we know as consciousness; the highest is that in which life develops conscious mentality in the form of amentally perceptible sensation which in this transition becomes the basis for the development of sense-mind and intelligence. It is in the middle stage that we catch the idea of life as distinguished from Matter and Mind, but in reality it is the same in all

the stages." Thus, "there is no break, no rigid line of demarcation between the earth and the metal formed in it or between the metal andthe plant and...there is none either between the elements and atoms that constitute the earth or metal and the metal or earth that they constitute. Each step of this graded existence prepares the next, holds in itself what appears in that which follows it. Life is everywhere, secret or manifest, organised or elemental, involved or evolved, but universal, all-pervading, imperishable; only its forms and organising differ."

It is this *prāno sarvāyusam* "the omnipresent Life that has manifested and inhabits the material universe" that the Mother has in view when she refers in one of her articles to " a few fundamental notions...needed to help us in our endeavour: to conquer the fear of death. As she says:

"The first and the most important thing is to know that *life is one and immortal.* Only the forms, countless in number, are transient and brittle. This knowledge one must establish securely and permanently in the mind, and as far as possible, one must identify one's consciousness with the life everlasting that is independent of any form but manifests itself in all forms. This gives the indispensable psychological basis from where to face the problem.

"Life then does not die; but the forms are dissolve, and it is this dissolution that physical consciousness fears. And yet the form changes constantly and there is nothing that debars this change from being progressive. *This progressive change alone can make it possible that death would no more be inevitable.*

But since, due to reasons that we shall presently explore, this progress change of the body and the physical being of man, responding fully to the demands made upon it by the divine Inhabitant in His infinitely progressive silf-becoming, could not be so far effectuated, death has been put forward and made to play its role *as an agent of life itself to serve the ends of cosmic*

wisdom.

That death is no more than a temporary curtain placed against eternal life - *more janua vitae* - or that death is but the obverse of the coin of Life, as hinted by the Osirian Mysteries, has been known to the mystics throughout the ages. This knowledge has been variously given literary expressions of which a few representative ones may be cited here:

(i) "Death is life." (Novalis)

(ii) "Life is death and Death is life." (Euripides)

(iii) "All Death in Nature is Birth, and in Death itself appears visibly the exaltation of Life." (Fichte)

(iv) "For birth hath in itself the germ of death,
But death hath in itself the germ of birth...
For they are twain yet one, and Death is Birth."
(Francis Thomson: "Ode to the Setting Sun")

(v) "Life and Death - two companions who relieve one another in the leading of the soul to its journey's end."

(Paul Richard)

(vi) "Life [is] a figure of death and Death of life."

(Sri Aurobindo, *Eight Upanishads*, p.51.fn.)

So we see that the opposition that our mentality makes between life and death is no more than an error of perspective brought about by the superficial view of things deceived by the appearances. As a matter of fact, death is there simply to serve the purpose of life, and disintegration of substance no less than renewal of substance, change of form no less than maintenance of form are the constant process of life itself. Death is the vaulting-board that life has chosen in order to pass from birth to greater birth, till the hour comes when there will be

"The end of Death, the death of Ignorance."

(*Savitri*, Book XI, Canto I, p.708

Death at the Service of life

I have given three thy awful shape of dread
And thy sharp sword of terror and grief and pain
To force the soul of man to struggle for light
On the brevity of his half-conscious days.
Thou art his spur to greatness in his works,
The whip to his yearning for eternal bliss,
His poignant need of immortality.
Live, Death, awhile, be still my instrument.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book X, Canto IV.p.666)

This world was built by Death that he might live. Wilt thou abolish death? Then life too will perish. Thou can not abolish death, but thou may transform it into a greater living.

If Life alone were and not death, there could be no immorality... Death transformed becomes Life that is Immortality...

(Sri Aurobindo, *Thoughts and Aphorisms*)

When the earth will not need to die in order to progress, there will be no more death.

(The Mother, *Bulletin*, Vol.XV, No.3, p.47)

I am Immortality as well as Death.

(Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gitā , IX.19)

The body's death is a veritable instrument serving the interests of perpetually evolving life. Indeed, as we shall see in the course of our study, given the imperfect and limited self-cabined instrumental capacity and capability of man, the process of death has become necessary as a means and salutary in its effect, because "eternal change of form is the sole immortality to which the finite living substance can aspire and eternal change of experience the sole infinity to which the finite mind involved in living body can attain. This change of form cannot be allowed to remain merely a constant renewal of the same form-type such

as constitutes our bodily life between birth and death; for unless the form-type is changed and the experiencing mind is thrown into new forms in new circumstances of time, place and environment, the necessary variation of experience which the very nature of existence in Time and Space demands, cannot be effectuated. And it is only the process of Death by dissolution and by the *devouring of life by Life*, it is only the absence of freedom, the compulsion, the struggle, the pain, the subjection to something that appears to be Not-Self which makes this necessary and salutary change appear terrible and undesirable to our moratal mentality

So we see that the shole perspective of our discussion of the problem of death has changed, and we are led to the conclusion that in the as yet imperfect status of Life so far evolved and elaborated upon earth, death cannot be viewed as "a denial of Life, but as a process of Life". Indeed, Life, in its still imperfect manifestation, requires the spur of death in order to evolve to progressively higher and higher forms of existence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"Death is the question Nature puts continually to Life and her reminder to it that it has not yet found itself. If there were no siege of death, the creature would be bound for ever in the form of an imperfect living. Pursued by death he awakes to the idea of perfect life and seeks out its means and its possibility."

As a matter of fact, death has proved to be highly salutary, certainly to the evolution of their types of species, but also to the individuals constituting the species, thanks to the spiritual phenomenon of soul-rebirth.

Death serves a beneficial role for the individual creature, because it is an indispensable means to awaken in the latter's consciousness the need of perfection and progression. Indeed, "without it, creatures would remain contented indefinitely in the condition where they are," and it would have been well-nigh impossible to break the "dead resistance in the mortal's hear"[1] and "his slow

inertia as of living stone," In the luminous words of the Mother:

"Opposites are the quickest and the most effective means of fashioning Matter so that it may intensify its manifestation.... In view of this, there is evidently an analogous experience in respect of what one calls life and death. It is this kind of 'overshadowing' of constant presence of Death and the possibility of death, as it is said in *Savitri:* you have constant companion throughout your journey from cradle to grave; you are ceaselessly accompanied by the menace or presence of Death. And along with this there is in the cells *an intensity of the call for a Power of Eternity which would not be there but for this constant menace.* Then one understands, one begins to feel in quite a concrete manner that all these things are only *ways of intensifying the Manifestation, making it progress, making it more and more perfect.* And if the ways are crude, it is because the Manifestation itself is very crude. And as it perfects itself, as it becomes more fit to manifest that which is eternally progressive, cruder means will be left behind for subtler means and the world will progress, without the need of such brutal oppositions. This is so, simply because the world is still in its childhood and human consciousness also is altogether in its childhood".

From a more practical point of view too, the dispensation of 'natural' death comes indeed as a boon to the life-weary individual in his present status of ego-bound ignorant consciousness. Did not the grandfather of Edison find life too long after a century and die because he wanted to? It is only divinised consciousness and life that can find sources of perpetual interest to keep them going on. For the ordinary time-bound limited "I" of the individual, the very prospect of physical immortality would prove to be a damnable curse. In the picturesque words of A.W.Momerie:

"Think of the kind of life which these immortals would have to live. Century after century, millennium after millennium they would see the same everlasting faces, confront the same ever-

recurring phenomena, engage in the same worn-out exercises, or lounge idly in the same unchanging stagnation. They have drained every spring of knowledge. They have exhausted every source of enjoyment. No dim marvels, no boundless hopes, bckon them towards the future. They have no future. They have nothing but never-ending now. The incessant repetition, the unmitigated sameness, the eternal monotony of things would grow horrible and appalling to them. The world would become a hateful dungeon, and life an awful doom. What would they not give to migrate to some untried existence! They would be thankful even to lie down for ever in the attractive unconsciousness of the tomb."

The process of death has served the interests not merely of the individuals as individuals but of the species as well. Was it not Goe the who declared: "Death is Nature's expert contrivance to get plenty of life"? Indeed, the deathlessness of the constitutive individuals would prevent others of the same species from being alive at all. A simple calculation would show that the descendants of Adam, endowed with physical immortality, would have doubled every twenty-five years and in that process produced, in less than a hundred generations, many trillions of human beings so much so that their bodies, packed two or three deep, and conglomerated into one solid mass, would have covered the entire surface of the planet!

As a matter of fact, the remarkable truth that "the natural individual is a minor term of being and exists by the universal" and that "the individual life is compelled, and used, to secure permanence rather for its species than for itself" is borne out by biological evidences that have been specific and manifold. The opinion has even been expressed that all living matter once possessed potential immortality and death as a condition, non-existent in the beginning, was eventually adopted for the simple reason that "just such a safety valve was necessary to permit of their perpetuation of the race". Instead of going into an unnecessary elaboration of the evolutionary evidences in support of this

hypothesis, we may well quote from the writings of a few savants, thus bringing into focus the consensus of opinion held by contemporary men of science.

"Life was described by Bichat as 'the sum of the functions which resist death', but this is a one-sided emphasis. For, while it is characteristic of organisms that they are continually at work in securing the persistence of their specific organization, it is equally characteristic that they spend themselves in securing the continuance of their kind. (Instead of seeking to avoid death, to speak metaphorically, they *often rather invite* it, sacrificing themselves in producing and providing for the next generation."

"From the standpoint of survival value of the species, it is desirable for the individuals of today to give place eventually to those of to-morrow, because environing conditions are never constant for extensive periods, and it is only by giving the reproductive variants a change that new fitness may be established and prolonged survival be made possible. Insurance of the welfare of the species is the all-important accomplishment."

"If we could produce two societies or two groups of animals, one of them being formed of immortal individuals and the other of individuals growing old and being progressively replaced through death by new and younger ones, it is without a shadow of doubt that the second group would be the hardier and stronger of the two."

"From the point of view of evolutionary history, death has not been the primary phenomenon; it is rather a late-comer on the scene, appearing not so much as an intrinsic and absolute necessity inhering in the very essence of living matter, as through a process of progressive 'selection' in adaptation to the welfare of the species. A hidous and dreadful evil for the individual, death has proved salutary for the species, since, thanks to its agency, the species can continually renovate and revitalize itself through the introduction of younger and more robust individuals replacing the worn-out ones."

We are here discussing the benefit that accrues to the species through the general process of death of the constituting individuals. But modern biological thought has gone further to suggest the astonishing view that the 'specific potential life-span' of the individuals forming a particular species does not depend solely, or even primarily, upon the physiological factors arising in the individuals taken in isolation, but is rather governed by the global necessity of the species. Thus, in the view of Prof. J.Arthur Thomson, "natural death is not to be thought of as like the running down of a clock. It is *more than an individual physiological problem; it is adjusted in reference to the welfare of the species...* There is good reason for regarding occurrence of death at a particular time as adaptive."

Metalnikov expresses the same idea when he declares that "the individual cells are as a rule potentially immoral, but the limitation of this principle of immortality in the case of the higher forms of organisms apparently occurs not so much due to individual physiological exigencies as to some unspecified supra-individual causes (*causes surindividuelles*."

Dr.J.A.V. Butler seeks to specify this supra-individual cause of natural decay and death in the following terms:

"It would seem that the life span is determined by the interplay of two effects- the necessity of living long enough to start off the new generation and, having performed the task, the fact that a further lifetime is unnecessary and, in many respects, harmful to the well-being and development of the species. It is quite possible that mechanisms exist in organisms which bring about this limitation of the life period, when the biologically useful period is over, but we do not know what these mechanisms are."

If these views represented the *whole* truth of things, there could be no possibility whatsoever of increasing the life-span of man, not to speak of indefinitely prolonging his life. But although the aforesaid biological conclusion is probably valid in the case

of all infra-human species, it is not at all so in the case of man. For, as has been noted and commented upon by some observers, man is unique among living beings in having a disproportionately long, and from one point of view biologically useless, post-reproductive phase in the life-cycle. The implication is obvious: the individual man is not there solely to fulfil the interests of the race. Indeed, with the appearance of man upon the earth-scene the evolution has decisively changed its process and course. Up till the advent of man the organic evolution was effected through the automatic operation of Nature without the conscious participation of any living being, in the form of its self-aware will or seeking, aspiration or endeavour. But in man the living creature has for the first time become awake and aware of himself; he has felt that there can be a higher status of consciousness than his own; the aspiration to exceed and transcend himself is 'delivered and articulate' in him. It has thus become a practical proposition that in man a conscious evolution may replace the subconscious and subliminal evolution so far adopted by Nature.

The appearance of man on the earth-scene has been indeed a unique event in the great process of cosmic Becoming, and his role in the universe is verily capital. For, "to the Life-Spirit, the individual in whom its potentialities centre is pre-eminently Man, the Purusha. It is the Son of Man who is supremely capable of incarnating God. This Man is the Manu, the thinker, the Manomaya Purusha, mental person or soul in mind of the ancient sages. No mere superior mammal is he, but a conceptive soul basing itself on the animal body in Matter. He is conscious Name or Numen *accepting and utilising form as a medium through which Person can deal with substance.*"

Also, "the ascent to the divine Life is the human journey, the Work of works, the acceptable Sacrifice. This alone is man's real business in the world and the justification of his existence, without which he would be only as insect crawling amoung other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which

has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe."

And this adds for man a new dimension to the problem of death and earthly immortality. For, although we have seen that the natural opposition we are apt to make between life and death is an error of the habitual myopic consciousness of man, an opposition "false to inner truth though valid in surface practical experience", and also that "death has no reality except as a process of life", yet, the question remains: if death is not the fundamental truth of experience, if it is to be regarded as a process of life itself in the latter's still imperfect status of self-unfolding, does not man, so far the highest embodiment of evolving life, possess the capacity and capability of outgrowing that imperfect status, and thus rendering the process of death no longer a practical necessity and hence eliminable from his individual life?

After all, a movement of progress that needs to be accomplished through repeated and radical shuffling of mortal forms, thus necessitating the appearance of death, is not a 'game' that is fundamentally constructive or intrinsically desirable. As the Mother has observed while discussing the question of the necessity of death:

"She [Nature] loves her meanderings, her successive trials, her defeats, her recommencement, her new inventions. She loves the caprices of the way, the unexpectedness of the experience. One might almost say that for her the longer the time it takes, the more it is amusing.

"But you get tired even with the best of games. There comes a time when one has need to change.

"And you dream of a game in which it will *no longer be necessary to destroy in order to progress*."

And since we are assured by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that, given the fulfilment of a certain set of conditions, death can be done away within the life of the individual, and cosmic Life can fulfil itself in a continuously progressive way, we seek to find out the basic metaphysical factors that render the advent of death inevitable in the life of a human being. And for that we may very well start with the suggestive conclusions arrived at by contemporary scientific researches in this field, not indeed as probative but only as illustrative of the nature and process of Life and Death. This approach is not altogether unjustified; for as Sri Aurobindo has so clearly pointed out:

"Science and metaphysics (whether founded on pure intellectual speculation or, as in India, ultimately on a spiritual vision of things and spiritual experience have each its own province and method of inquiry. Science cannot dictate its conclusions to metaphysics any more than metaphysics can impose its conclusions on Science. Still if we accept the reasonable belief that Being and Nature in all their states have a system of correspondences expressive of a common Truth underlying them, it is permissible to suppose that truths of the physical universe can throw some light on the nature as well as the process of the Force that is active in the universe - not a complete light, for physical Science is necessarily incomplete in the range of its inquiry and has no clue to the occult movements of the Force."[1]

Chapter-14

Metaphysical Factors of Death

Chapter-14

Although God made the world for his delight,
An ignorant Power took charge and seemed his Will
And Death's deep falsity has mastered Life.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri,* Book X, Canto III, p. 629)

Death is the constant denial by the All of the ego's false self limitation in the individual frame of mind, life and body.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Isha Upanishad*, p. 103)

It was the conditions of matter upon earth that have made death indispensable. The whole sense of the evolution of Matter has been a growth from a first state of unconsciousness to an increasing consciousness... A fixed form was needed in order that the organised individual consciousness might have a stable support. And yet it is this fixity of the form that made death inevitable.

(*Conversations of the Mother,* p. 58)

How could that escape death which lives by death?

(Paul Richard, *The courage of Christ,* , p. 186)

A. First Factor : The Part against the Whole

The individual life, emerging as a finite and ephemeral wave in the bosom of the 'All-Force' that is governing the world, has constantly to bear the disrupting impact of the latter. In order to secure permanence for itself, it has perforce to contend with this All-Force and establish its harmony with it. But although it is a fact that Life is power, *vāyuragni,* and that the growth of the individual life brings in its wake a corresponding increase of the

individual power, still, in the nature of things, "it is impossible for a divided and individualised consciousness with a divided, individualised and therefore limited power and will to be master of the All-Force; only the All-Will can be that and the individual only, if at all, by becoming again one with the All-Will and therefore with the All-Force. Otherwise, the individual life in the individual form must be always subject to the three badges of its limitation, Death, Desire and Incapacity."

B. Second Factor: The Part against All Other Parts

The divided and individualised life represents but one vortex amongst a countless number of similar vortices put forth by the All-Force, *sarva-kratu,* manifesting inthe universe. It is no better than "a particular play of energy specialised to constitute, maintain, energise and finally to dissolve when its utility is over, one of the myriad forms which all serve, each in its own place, time and scope, the whole play of the universe."

Now, in this welter of mutually jostling fragmented life-forces, the energy of life imprisoned in a particular individual frame has constantly to withstand the mutlipronged attacks coming from all around. Indeed, for each individual life it turns out to be a ruthless battle of one against all. And the cosmic movement seems to take the form of a Great Hunger, *mahābubhuksā,* wherein each separate life is trying to prey upon the energy of other lives by feverishly seeking to devour and feed on them. But in the occult dispensation of things, a limited existence cannot be an 'eater,' *annāda,* all the while, without at the same time serving as 'food'. *anna* to others.

Thus, "the life organised in the body is constantly exposed to the possibility of being broken up by the attack of the life external to it or, its devouring capacity being insufficient or not properly served or there being no right balance between the capacity of devouring and the capacity or necessity of providing food for the life outside, it is unable to protect itself and is

devoured or is unable to renew itself and therefore wasted away or broken; it has to go through the process of death for a new construction or renewal."

C. Third Factor :Action and Reaction

Life by its very nature is self-expansive and the individual life forms no exception to this rule. Thus, even though limited in capacity and deficient in resources, it attempts, consciously or subconsciously, to extend its sway over the environment. But this environment is not a mere vacuum, nor is it a mass passively yielding to any pressure from outside. Occultly viewed, this looks like an arena swarming with innumerable entities and powers that too in their turn are constantly seeking to self-expand, and hence become "intolerant of, revolt against and attack the existence which seeks to master them."

In this way, a very adverse reaction is set up in the milieu against the encroaching and impacting individual life and "however strong the mastering life, unless either it is unlimited or else succeeds in establishing a new harmony with its environment, it cannot always resist and triumph but must one day be overcome and disintegrated."

D. Fourth Factor: Life the Consumer

What is the relation between the substantial forms and the pervading life that creates and maintains them? In the language of the Upanishad, the life-force act as the *anna,* food, of the body, and at the same time it uses up the body as its own food.

In other words, the life-energy in the individual creature continually provides the necessary stuff and materials with which the forms are being built up, maintained and renewed through a process of dynamic equilibrium. But at the same time, as a reverse operation, the self-imprisoned life-energy in the limited individual draws upon the substantial stuff of its own creation, in an attempt to replenish its own fund.

Thus, in the matrix of the individual body, there is a constant and continuous two-way flow of energy: life-force supporting the physical stability, and the material body supplying the needs of life. But this is not always done in harmony; rather, life and body often act as "co-wives", *sapatnātivyādhino,* battling against each other to the detriment of both. The aforesaid state of reciprocal maintenance constitutes therefore a highly unstable state of equilibrium, apt to be easily disturbed and broken because of this lack of inner harmony and also owing to the essential limitation of the life-energy in the ego-bound separative individual existence.

Now, "if the balance between these two operations is imperfect or is disturbed or if the ordered play of the different currents of life-force is thrown out of gear, then disease and decay intervene and commences the process of disintegration.

Over and above this, when appears on the scene and seeks to grow and develop in the individual frame, it creates an additional strain on the body and the maintenance of life becomes proportionately precarious. For, "there is an increasing demand of the life-energy on the form, a demand which is in excess of the original system of supply and disturbs the original balance of supply and demand, and before a new balance can be established, many disorders are introduced inimical to the harmony and to the length of maintenance of the life."

E. Fifth Factor: War of the Members

To a superficial view of things, the individual man seems indeed to be a single whole, undivided in consciousness and integrated in will. But a deeper probe reveals the disconcerting fact that, in the present state of his evolutionary development, man's being and nature is not all 'of one kind, of one piece,' but rather a complex and heterogenerous amalgam of many elements, not all of them harmonised and co-ordinated in their urges and

pulls.

Thus it is that in the compass of an individual existence, there exists an acute discord and disparity in the contrary self-drives of the three evolutionary formations, Matter, Life and Mind. Instead of being *anyonyabaddhabāhu,* each one offering the others its helping hands, and *grhiakantha,* all seized and governed by the divine Lord inthe supremely harmonious cosmic Dance, *rāsalitā,* they try to go their own separate ways, in total disregard of the stresses and strains they are apt to inflict upon the other parts, in their whimsical separate swirls.

In particular,—and this is very much pertinent to our discussion,—"the Life is at war with body; it attempts to force it to satisfy life's desires, impulses, satisfactions and demands from its limited capacity what could only be possible to an immortal and divine body; and the body, enslaved and tyrannised over, suffers and is in constant dumb revolt against the demands made upon it by the Life."

The mind on its part is engaged in war both against the life and the body. And the consequences of this battle of the members, this internecine war of attrition into he being, cannot but be disastrous for the prolonged maintenance of the embodied life.

F. Sixth Factor: Imperfect Poise of Consciousness and Force

The individual self or being is in essence one with the Divine and is secretly aware of its divine potentialities. In manifestation it assumes the aspect of Purusha or conscious being supporting the Prakriti or Nature that is the executive side of Chit-Shakti.

This one and unique Being projects itself on each plane of nature, into he form of a representative Prusha or being that is proper to that particular plane. Thus, in man, there is a mental being corresponding to the mental nature, a vital being corresponding to the vital nature and a physical being answering to

the physical nature.

Now in the evolutionary emergence so far effectuated here upon earth, the dual aspect of Chit-Shakti—the aspect of consciousness and the aspect of force—have not quite marched in step, thus creating a deleterious division between the demand of the conscious being, Purusha, and the capacities of the force of nature, Prakriti-Shakti. In man, for example, there is not only a division and conflict between the diverse demands and pulls of the mental, the vital and the physical beings, but what is worse, each of them is also divided against itself.

Thus, "the capacity of the body is less than the capacity of the instinctive soul or conscious being, the physical Prusha within it, the capacity of the vital force less than the capacity of the impulsive soul, the vital conscious being or Purusha within it, the capacity of the mental energyless than the capacity of the intellectual and emotional soul, the mental Purusha within it. For the soul is the inner consciousness which aspires to its own complete self-realisation and therefore always exceeds the individual formation of the moment, and the Force which has taken its poise inthe formation is always pushed by its soul to that which is abnormal to the poise, transcendent of it; thus constantly pushed it has much trouble in answering, mode in evolving from the present to a greater capacity."

Now the question is: how to solve this problem of division between consciousness and force? Mind, as it grows, tries in its own limited way to resolve the resultant conflicts, mostly through a process of makeshift compromise. But this *ad hoc* solutions no solution at all, and mind fails miserably in the end. As a matter of fact, the problem cannot be solved on the plane of the mind, for essentially this is a question of satisfying in full the infinite aspiration of an immortal being,—the secret godhead, the embodied Divine—lodged in the confines of a mortal life and body. Hence, the mind of man, baffled by the immensity of the task, gives up the attempt in a mood of desperation "either by submission with the materialist to the mortality of our apparent being or with the ascetic and the regionalist by the rejection and condemnation of the earthly life and withdrawal to happier and easier fields of existences.

G. Seventh Factor: The Infinite as a Summation of the Finite

Now we come to the last fact,—indeed, the most crucial and fundamental of all,—that necessitates and justifies the presence of Death inthe actual state of evolutionary progression. For, it arises from the basic "necessity of the nature and object of embodied life itself, which is to seek infinite experience on a finite basis."

Indeed, this stupendous cosmic Becoming has for its secret purpose and goal the discovery and enjoyment, in Space and Time, of all that already exists beyond Time and Space. And in this cosmic Drama, *visva-lilā,*

The soul is a figure of the Unmanifest,
The mind labours to think the Unthinkable,
The life to call the Immortal into birth,
The body to enshrine the Illiumitable.

But, in the as yet imperfect elaboration of evolutionary possibilities, the form and the basis through which and upon which the individual soul spurred by its secret sense of divine infinitude seeks to build up its infinite experience, is by its very organization limited and rigid, thus circumscribing the possibility of experience. In the conditions of existence as at present prevailing, this infinite experience on a finite basis becomes at all feasible only through the successive assumption and dissolution of an infinite series of forms. In the words of Sri Aurobindo:

"The soul, having once limited itself by concentrating on the moment and the field, is driven to seek its infinity again by the principle of succession, by adding moment to moment and thus storing up a Time-experience which it calls its past; in that Time

it moves through successive fields, successive experiences or lives, successive accumulations of knowledge, capacity, enjoyment, and all this it holds in subconscious or superconscious memory as its fund of past acquisition in Time. To this process change of form is essential, and for the soul involved in individual body change of form means dissolution of the body."[1]

We have completed our study of the metaphysics of Death; we have seen the necessity and justification for this process of Nature, not indeed as a denial of Life, but as the process of Life itself. For to repeat in part what we have quoted before, "death is necessary because eternal change of form is the sole immortality to which *the finite living substance* can aspire and eternal change of experience the sole infinity to which *the finite mind involved in living body* can attain."

Such is then the problem of death; and once the problem is known in its fundamental nature, the solution must be forthcoming inthe march of the spirit. Indeed, the italicised portions of the above citation already suggest the possible clues to it.

Chapter-15

The Physiology of Senescence and Death

Chapter-15

On life was laid the haunting finger of Death.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book II, Canto VII, p. 203)

A breath of disillusion and decadence
Corrupting watched for Life's maturity
And made to rot the full grain of the soul:
Progress became a purveyor of Death

(*Ibid.*, Book II, Canto VII, p. 204)

"This is the scientific view of death. But it leaves death with all it mystery, with all its sacredness; we are not in the least able to the present time to say what life is — still less, perhaps, what death is. We say of certain things — they are alive; of certain others — they are dead; but what the difference may be, what is essential to these two states, science is utterly unable to tell us at the present time."

(Dr. Minot, *Age, Growth and Death)*

The phenomenon of senile decay and natural death has remained till this date an insoluble riddle to science. We have willy-nilly come to accept the fact that all things born must live for a while, grow old with time and eventually die. But physiology knows no reason why the body should ineluctably wear out in this way. As Dr. Maurice Vernet has so trenchantly pointed out. "Biologically speaking and in natural conditions, that is to say, accidental violence being excluded, there should not and need not have be end eath at all...Viewed from the aspect of the body, death seems to us to be altogether meaningless *(un non-sens absolu)"*

The same idea has been expressed in different ways by some other eminent medical authorities as well: *e.g.,*

"There is no physiological reason at the present day why men should die." (Dr. William A. Hammond)

"Such a machine as the human frame, unless accidentally depraved or injured by some external cause, would seem formed for perpetuity. (Dr. *German Medical Prospectus*)

(i) *Law of organisation*— All life realises in time and in space a specific organisation when a characteristic of the species concerned, of course under normal conditions.

(ii) *Law of assimilation*—A living organism has the power to transform and make similar to its own substance the materials that it borrows from its environment as its nutrition.

(iii) *Law of regulation*—Whatever may be the quantity or the quality of exchange operations that a living organism sets up with the surrounding world an incossant regulation intervenes to maintain the organisation in the specific equilibrium of its rhythms, founctions and tissue composition.

(iv) *Law of reproduction* — Even living being, under normal conditions, possesses the power to self-reproduce itself in entically.

(v) *Law of specificity* — Every living form is, in its fundamental excitability (response), specifice to the species to which it belongs.

(vi) *Law of reversibility* — For every new existence, there occurs a cyclic return to the state of indifferentiation, and, throughout the course of life, there manifests a tendency tocome back to the fundamental equilibrium state of the species.

Without seeking to elucidate these laws of life in terms intelligible to non-scientific readers, let us concentrate on the second law alone. For, it is this law of assimilation that proves sufficient by itself to characterise a living body, and it is perphaps some